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THE

CATHOLIC DOCTRINE

ON

JUSTIFICATION:

EXPLAINED AND VINDICATED.

BY

THE RIGHT REV. FRANCIS PATRICK KENRICK,

Bishop of Arath, and Coadjutor of the Bishop of Philadelphia.

"Him that knew no sin, for us he hath made sin, that we might be made the justice of God in him."—2. Cor. v. 21.

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No. 9 George Street.

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PREFACE.

The following work owes its origin to the suggestion of a friend. In conversing familiarly on the very remarkable return of some prominent Oxford divines to Catholic truth on points hitherto most violently controverted, it was observed that the great principle of justification by faith only, which Luther justly regarded as the source and essence of his whole system, was openly abandoned, and the Catholic doctrine, as expounded by the Council of Trent, admitted, with only some verbal distinctions and modifications, serving rather to veil the concession, than to qualify it. In these circumstances it was suggested that a candid and clear statement of Catholic faith on this important subject might be beneficial to many, whom the Oxford concessions had prepared for a more impartial examination of the question. The work of the Protestant Episcopal Bishop of Ohio subsequently came into the author's hands; on reading which he was startled by its exaggerated tone, and surprised at some mis-statements of principles and misquotations of authorities, into which this prelate had been betrayed. Had the works of St. Thomas of Aquin, or the decrees of the Council of Trent been in the hands of Bishop M'Ilvaine, when he wrote his treatise, he could not have mistaken their meaning, and would

not have misquoted them, as I shall show that he has done in some instances. To the same cause I feel bound to ascribe his mis-statements of Catholic doctrine. The vehemence of his language, and his unmitigated denunciations of our faith may be accounted for by the pain naturally felt at seeing his Oxford brethren give us so undisputed a triumph over the Reformers in the vital principle of their revolt, which they brand with anathema as a new gospel, contrary to the everlasting Gospel of Jesus. "We are bound, therefore," says Bishop M'Ilvaine, "with regard to their divinity, as they feel bound with regard to ours by that Apostolic charge: 'Though an angel from heaven preach unto you any other gospel than that ye have received, let him be anathema.' "*

As if all were peace within, the Protestant Episcopal Bishop of New Jersey not long since called on a Presbyterian minister to retract his assertion in regard to the Catholic tendencies of the Oxford School. No one, not acquainted with the fact, could have suspected that his colleague in the West had already made and substantiated the charge in an elaborate treatise, and hurled anathema against the *old* Gospel. Bishop M'Ilvaine has, however, left the substance of the controversy almost untouched, and instead of answering the luminous arguments and authorities, both Scriptural and traditional, urged in the learned treatises of Dr. Pusey and Mr. Newman, has limited himself to show that such were not the sentiments of the early Divines of the English Establishment.

* Oxford Divinity, p. 104.

The Virginia Protestant Episcopal Convention has since branded the Oxford Divinity as heresy; whilst it receives marked favor from the Protestant Episcopal Bishops of Maryland and New Jersey, and others of their colleagues.

So grave is the controversy, that a respectable lay member of the Protestant Episcopal Church, Mr. Vanbrugh Livingston, has thought it his duty, in a work which displays great zeal with great temper, to warn the public against the errors of Bishop M'Ilvaine: "The weight," he observes, "and authority of Bishop M'Ilvaine's office render it still more necessary to caution the public against the errors of his theological system. We hold that it is the duty of laymen professing a membership with the same church, not to give way, 'no, not for an hour,' to one who 'seemeth to be somewhat, even a pillar in the church,' whenever they conscientiously believe that a fundamental truth of their most holy and most Christian faith, is involved in the subject at issue."* With this internal and domestic controversy it is far from my wish to interfere: but as Bishop M'Ilvaine has taken occasion from it to assail and misrepresent our tenets, it is equally my privilege and duty to exhibit to the public a candid and correct statement and defence of them. It matters not to us whether the teaching of the Oxford divines be conformable to the Articles of the Church of England, or to the sentiments of the leading divines of the English Establish-

* Remarks on Oxford Theology, by Vanbrugh Livingston. New York, 1841. p. 81.

ment. We judge not of revealed truth by such standards. The definitions of faith emanating from the Assembly of Christian bishops, and confirmed by the successor of Peter, who is divinely privileged to confirm his brethren, are for us authentic declarations of what God has revealed. This work, then, is not designed as a vindication of the Oxford divines against the charges of Bishop M'Ilvaine: nor was it originally intended in any respect as a reply to his work, although the subsequent perusal of this production suggested so many modifications and references as may appear to give it that character.

I hoped against hope that the days of controversy were drawing to a close, when I perceived the extraordinary movement at Oxford, and the very significant insinuations of the famous Tract No. 90. "Religious changes, to be beneficial, should be the act of the whole body; they are worth little if they are the mere act of a majority." . . . . "Our Church's strength would be irresistible, humanly speaking, were it but at unity with itself: if it remains divided, part against part, we shall see the energy which was meant o subdue the world preying upon itself, according to our Saviour's express assurance, that such a house 'cannot stand.'* I discovered in the writings of these divines, and of several of the divines of the Protestant Episcopal Church in this country, a yearning after Catholic unity, and a wearisomeness of the endless divisions, which, under the name of Religion, disfigure and disgrace Christianity.

* Tract No. 90. Introduction.

The Essay of Bishop Smith on Christian Union, and the Appeal of Bishop Hopkins to our Hierarchy, were not among the most serious symptoms of that disposition; but a leading periodical of their Communion proclaimed it in no measured terms: the name of Protestant was studiously set aside, and every effort used to familiarize themselves and others with the appellation of Catholic: the ancient faith on many points was defended covertly or openly: and their writers were seen closely pressing on the traces of those of Oxford. Thinking that there was reality in all these demonstrations, and that the day of mercy was at hand, when feuds and errors might be forgotten, in the embrace of Catholic Unity, I ventured respectfully to urge the Episcopal prelates to realize what seemed to be a favourite object with some of their number. But I regret to have met with no corresponding feeling. Yet will I not despair. If by amicable conference nothing is to be hoped for, the candid exposition of Catholic truth, as acknowledged by eminent divines of the Anglican Communion, may prepare the way for reconciliation. Many will awaken as from a lethargy, when they hear Mr. Newman proclaim the leading principle of the Reformation to be a manifest absurdity: "It would seem," he says, "that Luther's doctrine, now so popular, that justifying faith is trust, comes first, justifies by itself, and then gives birth to all graces, is not tenable: such a faith cannot be, and if it could, would not justify."*

* Lectures, p. 239.

Of the Oxford divines I shall only say, that the homage which on this and many other points they have rendered to Catholic truth, makes it the more to be regretted that they have not given their unqualified assent to all the doctrines of faith, and lent their whole influence to the sacred cause of Catholic unity. Whether the strictures in which they occasionally indulge be the remains of former prejudices, or offerings made to the prejudices of their countrymen, it is evident that their obvious tendency is to destroy what the writers otherwise build up of the fabric of primitive Religion, and to afford pretexts for delaying the consummation of that union which every sincere friend to Christianity must desire. They have, indeed, awakened public attention to primitive faith and practice, and prepared the way for a general return to it: but if after having advanced to the portal of the temple, they hesitate to enter and adore in humility of faith, they deprive themselves of those blessings, which others may have been led by their teaching to embrace.

It is painful to perceive that those who in this country have re-echoed the Oxford principles seem to indulge in increased virulence against that venerable authority, which Mr. Newman, in his celebrated Tract No. 90, proclaims "the head of the Catholic world," and in which he recognizes a primacy of Order. The most unmeasured abuse of the Roman Pontiff appears to them necessary to repel the charge advanced by their brethren, of the Roman tendency of their principles. They seem to forget what the

Tractarians declare they can never forget, that Rome was their mother, and that she reclaimed their ancestors from heathenism. How far they may succeed in satisfying their colleagues, it is unimportant to consider: but if they seriously seek Catholic unity, they should be sensible that the first step to it is the admission of "the centre of unity," which, in a qualified sense, Mr. Newman acknowledges the Roman Pontiff to be. Every plan of union among Protestants is a dream of fancy, as Mr. Hallam after Grotius admits, unless the authority of the Bishop of Rome be admitted. It is not then by gross invectives against the first Bishop of the Christian Church they can promote the cause of Christian truth, or charity, or prove their own claims to the confidence and respect of a Christian community.

PHILADELPHIA.
FEAST OF ST. BERNARD, 1841.

CHAPTER I.

ORIGIN OF LUTHER'S DOCTRINE.

The promulgation of the indulgences which Leo X. offered to such as contributed to the building of the magnificent church of St. Peter, gave occasion to the revolt of Luther. Staupitz, the Vicar General of the Order of hermits of St. Augustin, felt aggrieved at the preference given by the Archbishop of Mayence to Tetzel, and his Dominican brethren, who were commissioned to announce the indulgences, and collect the contributions of the faithful; and he, accordingly, charged Luther, a member of his order, and professor of divinity in the University of Wittenberg, wherein Staupitz was first Dean of the Theological faculty, to denounce publicly the extravagant assertions, and enormous abuses ascribed to the Dominican questers. Whether it was that Luther was already infected with the errors of John Huss, which in the preceding century had many partisans in Germany, and that he seized this occasion to give them publicity, or that the germs of error were lodged in his mind, which the heat of dispute matured into avowed heresies, or that, contrary to his previous settled convictions, he hazarded assertions to

annoy his adversaries, and afterwards sustained them with proud consistency; certain it is that he did not come forth from the seclusion of the cloister, uncalled and unprovoked, to give to the world the results of his meditations, in the calm language of philosophy, or with the enthusiasm of an apostle, to whom heaven had revealed its secrets. He did not at once appear as one who was divinely instructed to reform a corrupted world, and who was prepared to exhibit in its full connexion the whole counsel of God. He rose at the bidding of his Religious Superior to vindicate the honor of the order to which he belonged, and which appeared to have been slighted by the preference given to a different institute: and though in his first address he startled his brethren by the boldness of his assertions, he said nothing that might not be ascribed to an excited state of mind, and might not be considered as directed against opinions of schoolmen, rather than the doctrines of the Church. The Dominicans were accused by him of exaggerating the advantages of Indulgences, and thus setting aside the more necessary Christian virtues; they were arraigned as guilty of employing low stratagems to entice contributors, and were said to disgrace the ministry and the Church by various unworthy practices. It is not easy, at this distance of time, to determine what foundation there was for such serious charges against so illustrious an order; but were we to judge from the printed instructions of Tetzel, we must regard them as groundless.* It is, however, certain that Luther as yet cried anathema to any one who who should call in question the power of Indulgences,† although he threw out many rash propositions

* Instructions—Büchlein für die Prediger zur Anpreisung des Ablasses.

† Prop. 71. an. 1517. T. I. Viterb.

in regard to them, which he subsequently moulded into formal heresies.* An indulgence is an act of ecclesiastical authority, by which penitents are exempted from the canonical penances assigned to certain sins. It supposes the necessity of penitential humiliations and austerities for the expiation of sin, even after its guilt has been remitted in the Sacrament of Penance. Luther questioned this necessity. God, he said, forgives fully and unreservedly; the Saviour has atoned for all our sins, and the sinner is justified, that is, discharged from all sin, the moment he believes that his sins are forgiven him in Christ. Justification became from this time the primary doctrine of the reformer; and justifying faith was defined by him to be the firm belief of the individual that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to him, to the total remission of his sins; and was declared to be as certain as his belief in the incarnation of Christ.† Yet he denied that justice was actually communicated to the sinner, who, he said, is accounted just, in regard to Christ, but is not made just in reality by any divine gift. He exaggerated the power of faith, and said that it alone justifies, independently of all other virtues, which, nevertheless, he sometimes represented as its necessary results; and independently of all works, which, he alleged, foster pride and self confidence,

* Sartorius, a protestant writer, acknowledges that Luther stumbled on many unforeseen obstacles in his headlong career, and that no indication is seen of the execution of a grand conception of a vast genius: "Luther ne connaissait pas la route qu' il avait à parcourir. Aussi alla-t-il souvent se heurter contre des obstacles imprévus. Il n' avait aucune idée d'un ces plans conçus avec un esprit vaste, et exécutés ensuite avec vigueur." Histoire de la guerre des paysans, p. 42.

† Luth. T. 1. Vit. Prop. 1518. f. 52. Serm. de Indulg. f. 61. Act. apud Legat. Apost. f. 211. Luth ad Frider. f. 222.

to the detriment of faith. "We need not works to please God, but naked faith, for we should come with Isaac alone, that is, in faith: we must leave behind us the servants and asses, namely, works. The more wicked you are, the more readily God infuses his grace."* "We are not sure," he says in another place, "of our repentance, and we cannot be certain that in our best works we do not commit mortal sins, on account of the hidden vice of vain glory or of self love."† The efficacy of the Sacraments was likewise denied, and instead of divine instruments of grace, they were regarded as mere seals of the promises, and incentives to faith. The merit of works was totally discarded, and their necessity was attacked in terms that were not at all favorable to the purity of Christian morals. Not only did his adversaries accuse him of opening the floodgates of corruption; but his apologists themselves have been obliged to acknowledge that his language needs the mildest interpretation to reconcile it with the universally acknowledged principles of morality. Walch, a Lutheran divine, in a learned work on the symbolic books of his communion, observes: "Certain maxims of Luther are objected to us such as 'that purity of doctrine must be strictly attended to, but that sanctity of life is not to be inculcated so strenuously;' 'the more wicked you are, the nearer you are to grace;' 'no sins but unbelief alone, can damn a man;' 'it is as necessary to have conjugal intercourse, as it is to eat, drink, and sleep.' We do not deny that such expressions of the sentiment of the blessed man are to be found!"‡ To meet the charge of licentiousness

* Serm. de pisc. Petri.

† Luth. prop. 48. T. I. 1518.

‡ Introd. ad libros symbol. Luther. l. 1. c. iii. §. xl.

which such language warrants, his apologist appeals to the morals of Luther himself,—a proof, at least, of a very questionable character. It is sufficient for my purpose to have shown the occasion of the system of justification by faith alone as propounded by him, and the consequences which followed it, namely the discarding of penitential works, the denial of the efficacy of the Sacraments, and the undervaluing of good works, together with the adoption of language of a licentious tendency. "The tree is known by its fruits."

The immediate associates of Luther found it necessary to relinquish or modify his principles on this important point; and in the Confession of Augsburg, which was drawn up by Melancthon, a great approach was made to the Catholic doctrine. The merit of good works was partially acknowledged; since by them we are said to merit an increase of the gifts of God, and various rewards.* In the Confession of Strasburg still greater advances were made, and the Catholic belief on justification was adopted, though expressed in different terms!† The main point on which Luther insisted was virtually abandoned by his professed adherents, who, in order to shield themselves from the dreaded imputation of approximating to the Catholic doctrine, endeavoured to obscure it by misrepresentation, and encumber it by incongruous and fantastic additions.‡

* Art. VI. Synt. Gen. p. 12. 20. 21.

† Confess. Argentorat. Cap. III. IV. and V.

‡ Vide Bossuet, Histoire des Variations l. III. passim.

CHAPTER II.

PROTESTANT TENETS.

It is not my desire, or intention, to charge any sect with consequences which may flow from their tenets, when those are disavowed by them, or to give a more unfavorable view of the tenets themselves, than the language in which they are expressed necessarily presents. Men are entitled to explain their own principles; and it is gratifying to perceive that a respect for the purity of Christian morals pervades all the formularies of the sects, and induces them to abjure what some conceive to be the natural tendency of their fundamental maxims. Justification by faith only, being the leading principle of Luther, has continued to be a distinctive tenet of most Protestants. Some have adopted the principle in its greatest latitude, and have boldly maintained *Antinomianism*, denying the obligatory force of the moral law; but most generally the various Protestant societies have rejected this consequence, and refused to acknowledge the justifying character of that faith which is not manifested in the observance of the commandments. In the thirty nine Articles of the Church established by law in England, which, with some modifications, have been adopted by the Protestant Episcopalians of the United States, and by the Episcopal Methodists, it is stated: "We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus

Christ by Faith, and not for our works or deservings; Wherefore, that we are justified by Faith only is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort, as more largely is expressed in the Homily of Justification."* Some doubt has been raised whether faith was supposed to be alone at the moment of justification, or to be the only instrument and means of justification, though actually attended with other virtues. The adoption of the adverb "only," instead of "alone," seems designed to leave a certain latitude of opinion on this point; but the Latin version, which is said to be of equal authority with the text, is not in this respect equivocal: "fide sola nos justificari doctrina est saluberrima."† The Homily of Justification is variously interpreted; but that of the Passion explicitly says: "that the only mean and instrument of salvation required of our parts, is faith." It further describes in what faith consists: "we must apprehend the merits of Christ's death and passion by faith; and that with a strong and steadfast faith, nothing doubting but that Christ by his one oblation and once offering of himself upon the cross, hath taken away our sins, and hath restored us again into God's favor, so fully and perfectly, that no other sacrifice for sin shall hereafter be requisite or needful in all the world."

It is thought by some that faith alone suffices for justification, but that the other virtues necessarily follow justification; so that though the believer is justified at the moment he apprehends the merits of Christ by faith, before he has conceived sorrow, love, or other pious sentiment; yet being justified, he necessarily loves God,

* Art. XI.

† Vide apud Bp. Mc'Ilvaine, Oxford Divinity, ch. ix. p. 330.

and hates sin. The want of repentance and love in one claiming to be justified by faith, is, then, a sure sign that he has not the faith which he imagines that he possesses. Others conceive that the other virtues must precede justification, being the fruits of a living faith: "This *sentence* that we be justified by faith only, is not so meant by them, that the said justifying faith is alone in man, without true repentance, hope, charity, dread and the fear of God, at any time or season."* Such is the interpretation of Mr. Newman, who is supported in this view even by many who are not advocates of what is generally known as 'Oxford Divinity.' They consider faith "as efficacious because it is 'the root of all Christian virtues,'—'the originating principle of love and every good work,' and thus in root and branch, the 'complex of Christianity.'† While endeavouring to reconcile the principle professed by the Reformers with sound doctrine, Mr. Newman further says: "The Reformers are not laying down a practical direction how to proceed *in order* to be justified, what is required of us *for* justification, but a large principle or doctrine ever to be held and cherished, that in ourselves we deserve eternal ruin, and are saved by Christ's mercy, and that not through faith only, but through faith and all graces."‡ Bishop Wilson of Calcutta, though entirely hostile to the Oxford system, does not suppose justification to take place without compunction; "Preach justification by faith only," (he says in his charge to his clergy,) "but that not by a dead, notional belief—a mere presumption—the faith of devils—but by a living, heart-felt, holy

* Newman on Justification pp. 282. 285.

† Vide Mc'Ilvaine, ch. x. p. 324.

‡ Newman p. 281.

principle of reliance upon Christ, springing from an awakened and contrite spirit."*

The Westminster Confesssion of Faith, and the Confession adopted by the Presbyterians of this country, say, "Faith, receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification; yet is it not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love."† This is further explained in the larger Catechism: "Faith justifies a sinner in the sight of God, not because of those other graces which do always accompany it, or of good works that are the fruit of it, nor as if the grace of faith, or any act thereof, were imputed to him for his justification; but only as it is an instrument by which he receiveth and applieth Christ, and his righteousness."‡ The Baptists in their Confession of Faith have adopted the very words of the Presbyterian Confession.

It is unnecessary to enter into the details of the various subdivisions of opinion that exist on this subject, among the many Protestant sects, and it is but justice to acknowledge that they all (except the antinomians) disclaim the consequences favourable to immorality which seem to follow from their abstract maxims. "With respect to the necessity of holiness, both in thought, and in word, and in work, as an indispensable qualification for the kingdom of heaven, all parties are agreed."§ Justification by faith alone may easily be mistaken for forgiveness, when rashly imagined, without sorrow for sin, change of life, or any principle of divine love; and may be thus conceived by an enthusiast, or by a libertine: but in this sense it is

* Charge in 1838. † Chap. xi. § 2. ‡ Qu. 73.

§ Faber's Prim. Doct. of Justification, Pref. xviii, xx.

generally disavowed and abjured by Protestants. The great points at issue between them and us, are, whether the faith required for justification be the persuasion of the imputation to the individual of the righteousness of Christ, or the general belief of all that God has revealed: and whether other dispositions besides faith are required for justification, not as the mere signs of faith, but as conditions without which justification is unattainable.—The Oxford Divines have recently admitted the substantial correctness of the doctrine of the Council of Trent, on the whole subject of justification. "I am inclined, says Mr. Perceval, "to believe that there is nothing in the Tridentine statements which may not be fairly reconciled with the Gospel Doctrine."*

* Perceval on the Roman Schism, p. 365. See also Newman on Justification, passim.

CHAPTER III.

NATURE OF FAITH.

According to Archbishop Usher, "the general object of true saving faith, is the whole truth of God revealed; but the special object of faith as it justifieth, is the promise of remission of sins by the Lord Jesus. . . . Though by the same faith whereby I cleave to Christ for the remission of sins, I believe every truth revealed; yet I am not justified by believing any truth but the promise of grace in the Gospel."* This view of faith is general among Protestants, many of whom, however, undervalue the necessity of that faith by which all revealed tenets and objects are embraced; and, making light of what they term sectarian and speculative tenets, consider this special faith in the imputation of the merits of Christ to be alone essential. The Catholic Church, on the contrary, teaches that the belief of all the revealed truths is that faith without which it is impossible to please God, and that it regards the justification of the wicked through divine grace; though no man is bound to believe, or can believe with certainty, his own justification without a special revelation from God. "Men," says the Council of Trent, "are disposed for justice, when, being excited and assisted by divine grace, conceiving faith by hearing, they are freely moved to God, believing to be true the things which are divinely revealed

* Usher's Body of Divinity p. 198.

and promised, and especially that the wicked man is justified by his grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus."* With us faith is the belief of all that God has taught; with Protestants justifying faith is the special persuasion of our justification through Christ: with us it is a homage of the understanding to divine wisdom and truth; with them it is the relying and resting on Christ. Luther alleged that he derived the first correct notion of faith from a religious of his convent, who, to relieve his mind from anxiety, bade him have faith in God, and not doubt that his sins were forgiven him. Such an exhortation may have been well meant, and certainly did not necessarily convey the idea of faith which Luther formed from it.† But whatever may have been the source whence he derived it, it is certain that his notion of faith was utterly erroneous, inconsistent with Scripture and tradition, and the origin and root of all his other errors. This can easily be shown.

When our Saviour gave the commission to his Apostles to preach his gospel to every creature, he added: "He that believeth, and is baptized shall be saved: he that believeth not, shall be condemned."‡ He evidently spoke of that faith which is unto salvation, and he indicated that it consisted in assenting to the preaching of the Gospel. This, as we learn from the corresponding text of St. Matthew, means all things whatsoever he had commanded.§ It was faith in the divinity of Christ, which obtained for St. Peter the eulogy and promises which are recorded by St. Matthew;‖ and the same strengthened him to receive the declaration of Christ, that he would

* Sess. vi. Cap. vi., Decr. de Justificatione.

† Vie de Luther par Audin, Vol. I. p. 93.

‡ Mark xvi. 16.

§ Mat. xxviii. 20.

‖ Mat. xvi. 17.

give his flesh for food, his blood for drink.* It is to the believer, who, on the authority of Christ, assents to the mysteries which are not tested by the eye of sense, that beatitude is ascribed: "Blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed."† Let any one, understanding the term "believe" in its obvious meaning of an *assent to Divine authority*, open the Scriptures, and all things are perfectly clear and consistent: but if he attempt to fix on it the meaning of a persuasion that his sins are forgiven him, he will find himself embarrassed at every step. There may be occasionally a secondary meaning, bearing some analogy to the primary sense, as when faith is used to signify the persuasion of the lawfulness of an act: "all that is not of faith is sin:"‡ or when the confidence which faith inspires is indicated by faith: "let him ask in faith nothing wavering;"§ and when miraculous power is ascribed to a lively faith: "if you had faith, like to a grain of mustard seed, you might say to this mulberry tree, be thou rooted up, and be thou transplanted into the sea; and it would obey you:"‖ but the general acceptation of the term is manifestly the belief of revealed truth, on the authority of God.

This idea of faith is plainly conveyed in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, wherein the Apostle treats of this virtue: "Now faith is the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that appear not."§ It is the fulcrum of our hope: it presents the unseen things of futurity to the mind, and realizes them. At the same time it receives the testimony of God as to the past: "By faith we understand that the world was

* John vi. 70. † John xx. 23. ‡ Rom. xiv. 23. § James i. 6.
‖ Luke xvii. 6. § Heb. xi. 1.

framed by the word of God; that from invisible things, visible things might be made."* It is the spring of every act of worship, the animating principle of religion: "By faith Abel offered to God a sacrifice exceeding that of Cain, by which he obtained a testimony that he was just, God giving testimony to his gifts, and by it he being dead yet speaketh."† Whilst Cain presented to God only of the fruits of the earth, Abel offered a victim from his flock, testifying thereby the divine dominion, and presenting an apt figure of the lamb that was slain from the beginning of the world. The acceptance of his sacrifice, and consequently his own justice, was miraculously manifested, and his example remains on record to stimulate our faith in the performance of religious duty. His blood cries from the earth, not only against his murderer, but as the type of the atoning blood that pleads our pardon. "By faith Henoch was translated, that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had testimony that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please God. For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and is a rewarder to them that seek him."‡ Faith in the existence and governing providence of God is the foundation of worship, and in every state of the world, has been an indispensable condition of acceptance with God. Every further revelation which God makes of himself and his works must be received with the same docility. Hence Noe, instructed in the divine counsels, although no indication had been yet afforded him of the threatened deluge, reverently received the revelation, and framed the ark in obedience to the divine mandate. "By faith Noe having received an

* Heb. xi. 3. † Ibidem v. 4. ‡ Ibidem v. 5.

answer concerning those things which as yet were not seen, moved with fear framed the ark for the saving of his house, by the which he condemned the world: and was instituted heir of the justice which is by faith."* His obedience, springing from faith, implied the condemnation of the unbelieving world, which disregarded the threats of divine vengeance. He was made heir of the justice which the patriarchs before him possessed, and which was by faith. In all these instances justifying faith is spoken of, and it is extended to every object of divine revelation, and not at all defined as consisting in the persuasion of the remission of sins.

It is important to observe the nature of the faith which disposed Abraham for justice. The words cited by the Apostle, in his epistle to the Romans, were written on occasion of the promise made to Abraham of a numerous posterity. When he had complained of the want of an heir, in consequence of which his property was likely to pass to the son of his steward, God gave him the assurance, that he himself should have a son; and added: "look up to heaven, and number the stars if thou canst. And he said to him: Even so shall thy seed be,"† "Abraham believed God, and it was reputed to him unto justice." His belief regarded the revelation made by God, the promise of an heir and a numberless race. It was grounded on the divine veracity. It did not directly regard his own justification, though he in whom he believed is the source of all justice, and the apostle observes of Abraham that he believed "in him that justifieth the ungodly."‡ Abraham was not an impious man at the time, for already he had yielded to God the obedience of faith, and left his country

* Heb. xi. 7. † Gen. xv. 5. ‡ Rom. iv. 5.

and kindred at his bidding; but the justice which he possessed, and which was confirmed and increased on this occasion, was the gift of God, and bestowed by his mercy. The observation of the apostle is intended to show that even Abraham had thus been justified, but the direct object of his faith was the revelation then made to him of his posterity.

The difficulties which his own advanced age and the sterility of Sara presented to the fulfilment of the promise, did not cause him to hesitate, as he knew that the power of God is as infinite, as his truth is unerring: "Before God, whom he believed, who quickeneth the dead; and calleth those things that are not, as those that are. Who against hope, believed in hope; that he might be made the father of many nations according to that which was said to him: '*So shall thy seed be.*' And he was not weak in faith: neither did he consider his own body now dead, whereas he was almost an hundred years old, nor the dead womb of Sara. In the promise also of God he staggered not by distrust; but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God: most fully knowing that whatsoever he has promised, he is able also to perform. And therefore it was reputed to him unto justice."* His faith, then, was an unlimited, unshaken belief in all that God revealed, grounded on divine truth and power. The Apostle elsewhere shows its universal character, and ascribes to it all the glorious actions of the patriarch. By faith he went forth from his country, in obedience to the divine mandate, and abode a pilgrim in a strange land, "for he looked for a city that hath foundations: whose builder and maker is God."† "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered

* Rom. iv. 17. † Heb. xi. 10.

Isaac; and he that had received the promises, offered up his only begotten son: (To whom it was said: *In Isaac shall thy seed be called.*) Accounting that God is able to raise up even from the dead."* The divine Omnipotence was the support of his faith.

The faith by which we are justified is in principle the same as that which sanctified the patriarchs, although the objects of the Christian revelation are more numerous. We believe the fulfilment of the promises made to Abraham, and embrace them as developed in Jesus Christ. Abraham joyfully looked forward to the day of Christ in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed; and we count ourselves happy in seeing this prophecy fulfilled, by the wide diffusion of the Church wherein these blessings are realized. We believe in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, whose glory has been revealed by the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father. In the name of this adorable Trinity the gospel is preached, and baptism administered. The commendation of Abraham's faith serves for our consolation: "It is not written only for him, that it was reputed to him unto justice: but also for us, to whom it shall be reputed, if we believe in him that raised up Jesus Christ our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up for our sins, and rose again for our justification."† Justifying faith is, then, the unreserved belief in God, sovereignly true and powerful; and it regards particularly the resurrection of Christ from the dead, as well as his immolation on the cross for our sins. "This is the word of faith which we preach," says the apostle, (applying to the Christian revelation the testimony of Moses, "the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth

* Heb. xi. 17. † Rom. iv. 23.

and in thy heart.") "For if thou confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thy heart that God hath raised him up from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For, with the heart we believe unto justice; but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."* The resurrection of Christ is the splendid evidence of his divinity, and is particularly embraced by faith, since if Christ be not risen again, our faith is vain.† But on his authority we embrace all things whatsoever he has revealed, captivating our understanding in obedience to him, and levelling every height of human intellect that rises up against the knowledge of God.‡

By faith, however, we do not mean, as Bishop McIlvaine, after Chemnitz, alleges, "a mere historical knowledge and naked assent, by which in general we acknowledge that those things are true which are revealed concerning God and his Word, not only in Scripture, but also in those things which are proposed under the title of tradition."§ Faith is the firm assent of the human understanding to the revelation of God, made known by his Church, the pillar and ground of truth; an assent proceeding from the divine influence of the Holy Ghost. It is necessarily limited to things revealed by God, and it embraces all things, by whatsoever channel it has pleased God to communicate them. All things contained in the divine Scriptures are to be firmly believed; but we do not indiscriminately embrace every thing that may be proposed under the title of tradition. Divine and apostolic tradition is carefully distinguished from human traditions; and those things only appertain to faith, which, by the

* Rom. x. 8.
† I. Cor. xv. 14.
‡ II. Cor. x. 5.
§ Oxford Divinity, p. 180.

solemn judgment of the Church, or other clear manifestation of her belief, are known to have been divinely revealed. This traditon is necessary for ascertaining the authority of the sacred Scriptures themselves, as without it we could not know with certainty which books are divinely inspired, so that all Christian faith necessarily reposes on tradition.*

When it is said that implicit faith of many articles is sufficient, the meaning is, that persons not instructed in all the details of revelation, must, nevertheless, give to God the unreserved homage of their understanding, by submitting their reason in all things to his truth, and being ready to acquiesce in every thing that bears the seal of his authority. Explicit faith is, however, required in the great mysteries of the Trinity, Incarnation, and Redemption, and other articles according to each one's station, duties, and opportunities. Bishop McIlvaine represents the Oxford divines as holding that explicit faith in the atonement is not necessary for justification;† but in this he appears to do them injustice: at least such is not a Catholic principle.‡

The idea which we present of faith is that which is naturally suggested by innumerable passages of Scripture. The Lutheran view of it is no where to be found. Nowhere do we find Christ exacting the firm belief of the remission of one's own sins as a condition for obtaining pardon. When he forgave the sins of the man afflicted with palsy, he cheered him by the assurance that his sins

* For a fuller exposition of this principle I refer to Moehler, Symbolik, l. 1. c. v. § 38, also to my Theologia Dogmatica, vol. 1. p. 341.

† Oxford Divinity, p. 85 and p. 513.

‡ Vide Prop. 64. condemned by Innocent XI. anno. 1679.

were forgiven him; "Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee:"* but he did not demand of him the previous conviction of forgiveness as a condition for receiving it. He gave the same assurance to the sinful woman, who washed his feet with her tears; and although he added, "thy faith hath made thee safe, go in peace:"† he said nothing to indicate that her faith was her own persuasion that her sins were forgiven. He meant rather to relieve her anxious and overburthened heart, lest her grief should know no bounds; and he bore testimony to her faith, that had led her to the feet of her physician, and opened the fountains of tears to wash away her stains. He gave Zacheus the assurance of pardon, after this penitent publican had declared his determination to distribute half of his property in alms to the poor, and to make fourfold restitution for the injustices which he had committed.‡ The dying thief received the same assurance, when he humbly implored a favourable sentence.§ On the other hand, the assent of the mind to divine truth is constantly indicated by faith. In reproaching the Jews for unbelief, Christ referred them to the writings of Moses, which bore testimony of him; and he declared that if they believed what Moses had written, they would receive with full faith the doctrine which fell from the lips of Him whom Moses pointed out: "If you do not believe his writings; how will you believe my words?"‖ He threatened them with death in their sins, unless they believed that he was the light of the world, the promised Saviour: "If you believe not that I am he, you shall die in your sins:"¶ from the blind man whose sight he had restored, he demanded

* Mat. ix. 2. Θαρσει.
† Luke vii. 50.
‡ Luke xix. 8.
§ Ibidem, xxiii. 42.
‖ John v. 50.
¶ Ibidem, viii. 24.

the belief of his divinity: "Dost thou believe in the Son of God?" and on his declaration of his divine character, the man professed his faith, and manifested it in humble worship: "He said: I believe, Lord. And falling down, he adored him."* He required belief in his works, which bore testimony of his divine origin, and many, convinced by them, and by the testimony of John, "believed in him."† When he declared himself the principle of resurrection and life; when he promised life to every believer, and questioned Martha on her faith, she meekly answered: "Yea, Lord, I have believed that thou art Christ the Son of the living God, who art come into this world."‡

St. John recorded the miracles of his divine Master in order to strengthen the faith of his disciples in his divinity, that so they might have life through him: "These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God: and that believing you may have life in his name."§ Philip the deacon would not administer Baptism to the candidate, until satisfied of his faith: and he made the solemn profession of it: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."‖ It is the same faith that Paul required of the trembling jailor, asking what he should do for his salvation: "Believe in the Lord Jesus: and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."¶ Here, as every where else, faith in the Lord Jesus is the belief of his divinity, of the mystery of redemption through his

* John, ix. 38. † Ibidem x. 42. ‡ Ibidem, xi. 27.
§ John, xx. 31. ‖ Acts viii. 37.

¶ Ibidem. xvi. 31. The Greek has επι in this place as also Acts x. 42. xi. 17. xxii. 19. Rom. iv. 24. But in general εις *in* is used, in the passages, which are almost numberless, wherein entire assent to the Divine Teacher is signified. The protestant version has substituted

blood, and of the whole revelation which he, the only-begotten who is in the bosom of the Father, has made.

Bishop McIlvaine adduces this last testimony as fatal to the doctrine which he nicknames Romanism. "Embrace," he says, "the answer of St. Paul, and you strike Romanism to the heart."* Let him know that we also repeat to the inquirer the sublime answer of the Apostle, without the least misgiving as to its correct application. We promise him salvation, provided he believe in the Lord Jesus, and we encourage him to put his entire confidence in the merits of Him crucified: we call on him to captivate his understanding in obedience to Christ; and when satisfied of the entire submission of his mind and will to this Divine Teacher, we wash him in the laver of regeneration from the stains of original and actual sin. Let those say as much, who, uncertain themselves of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, give false security to the confiding inquirer, flattering him with the delusion that his persuasion of the forgiveness of his sins ensures their remission.

Mr. Newman justly explodes the idea of faith consisting in the apprehension of the righteousness of Christ crucified, —in the persuasion that it is reckoned ours, the moment we fancy it to be so accounted: "You hear men speak of glorying in the cross of Christ, who are utter strangers to the nature of the cross as actually applied to them, *in water and in blood, in holiness and pain.* They think individuals are justified immediately by the great atone-

on every where, and thereby unduly favored the idea of reliance rather than assent. The Hebrew has ב or ל corresponding to *in*, or, the dative case, after the verb, which signifies belief: בטח expresses confidence. I. Par. v. 20.

* McIlvain on Oxford Divinity, ch. 1. p. 22.

ment—justified by Christ's death—justified by what they consider *looking* at his death. Because the brazen serpent healed by being looked at, they consider that Christ's sacrifice saves by the mind's contemplating it.—Gazing on the brazen serpent did not heal; but God's giving invisibly the gift of health to those who gazed. So justification is a power exerted on our souls by Him, as the healing of the Israelites was a power exerted on their bodies. Christ's cross does not justify by being gazed at IN FAITH, but by being actually set up within us, and that not by our act, but by God's invisible grace. Men sit and gaze and speak of the great atonement, and think this is appropriating it. Men say that *faith is an apprehending and applying;* FAITH CANNOT REALLY APPLY IT; man cannot make the Saviour of the world his own; the cross must be brought home to us, not in word, but in power, and this is the work of the Spirit.—This is justification."* Bishop Mc'Ilvaine, who quotes this testimony, interprets it as establishing "our own righteousness as much as our souls, our intellect, our affections are our own:" but there is an obvious difference, since the grace of our justification is communicated by the Spirit of God, and therefore not our own, save by the humble acceptance of the divine gift.

All the ancient symbols of faith professed the great doctrines of Christianity, whilst none of them expressed the belief of our justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ. "The remission of sins" is, indeed an article in the Creed of the Apostles, but it is explained in the Nicene and Constantinopolitan Creed as having especial reference to "one baptism for the remission of sins," and it embraces likewise the pardon which is connected with penance, in the exercise of the power given by Christ to remit sins,

* Newman's Lect. pp. 200. 201. 203.

or to retain them. No where is the believer found declaring his persuasion that he is justified in Christ. The ancient fathers are silent as to this imaginary faith. They urge the necessity of believing all that God has revealed, as proposed by the Church; and they mark as destructive of faith every error against divine tradition: but they no where tell us that each one must be firmly persuaded that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to him. They uniformly affirm that the Catholic faith, in which all the revealed doctrines are included, is a necessary condition for justice. "Our faith, that is, the Catholic faith, distinguishes the just from the unjust, not by the law of works, but by the very law of faith. For the just man liveth by faith."* Thus writes St. Augustin against the Pelagians. Writing, elsewhere, on the virtues of faith, hope, and charity, he says, that "faith regards things past, present, and to come, for we believe that Christ died, which is a past event; we believe that he sits at the right hand of the Father, which is a present fact; we believe that he will come to judge, which is a future event."† Although treating expressly of faith unto salvation, he does not at all require the belief of our individual justification; but constantly refers to the revealed doctrines proposed in the Church. St. Leo says: "This it is which justifies the impious, this it is which makes saints of sinners, if the true Deity and true humanity be believed in the one same Lord Jesus Christ."‡

In all the contests that, since the establishment of the Church, have been carried on for the integrity of faith, the universal understanding ever was, that faith is the belief

* Aug. in l. III. contra 2 epist. Pelag.

† Enchiridion, c. viii.

‡ Serm. IV. de Epiph.

of the revelation of God, and the disputes entirely turned on the points of revelation: to question or deny one of which was deemed an outrage to the truth of God, and to his majesty. At the commencement of the sixth century, St. Fulgentius, treating of the Catholic faith in its whole extent, says: "I rejoice that you are anxious to maintain the true faith without any tincture of unbelief: for without faith no conversion can avail or exist: for the authority of the Apostle declares: without faith it is impossible to please God! Faith is the foundation of all good: faith is the commencement of salvation. Without this faith no one can be numbered among the children of God; since without it no one in this life obtains the grace of justification; nor shall he hereafter possess eternal life."* As yet it was not discovered that those things were matters comparatively unimportant; that the essential and vital point was, that each one, whatever might be his Creed, should firmly believe his own justification, through the righteousness of Christ! Councils and Pontiffs hurled their anathemas against every heresy that raised itself up in opposition to the ancient tradition and teaching of the Church: and no soothing voice was then heard to lull the followers of jarring creeds into security, by directing them, whatever might be their sentiments, to believe *on* the Lord Jesus Christ, and be assured of the forgiveness of their sins. The fruit of this new idea of faith is seen in the religious indifference that puts truth and falsehood on a level, and leaves so many wandering through the mazes of error, without a thought of the evident danger that they may never reach the tree of life. It is this that has sapped the foundation of Protestantism.*

* In libro de fide ad Petrum. † Möhler, Symbolik, l. 1. c. iii. § xix.

This fatal security is fostered by a misapplication of the many texts in which justice and salvation are promised to the believer in Christ; and to render the delusion more complete the texts are translated, 'believe on Christ,' as if to rest on his righteousness. St. Paul, at Antioch in Pisidia, having declared the resurrection of Christ, thus addressed his Jewish brethren: "Be it known therefore to you, men brethren, that through him forgiveness of sins is preached to you: and from all the things, from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses. In him every one that believeth is justified."* The Apostle justly ascribes justification to every one that believes in Christ, because justification is proffered to the believer, though on condition that his faith be accompanied by penance, and that it work by love. He asserts the sufficiency of the atonement to release men from those bonds of sin from which the Mosaic law could not free them. "For it is impossible that with the blood of oxen and goats sins should be taken away. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith: Sacrifice and oblation thou wouldst not: but a body thou hast fitted to me,—"He taketh away the first, that he may establish that which followeth. In the which will we are sanctified by the oblation of the body of Jesus Christ once."† The believer who is justified is he who captivates his understanding in obedience to Christ, and embraces him with the affections of his heart. It is an abuse of language to apply the term "believer" to every one who calls him Lord, or who fancies himself justified by his merits, whilst he refuses to accept on his authority the mysteries which have been revealed. If we desire the benefit of justification, "let us draw near with a true heart in

* Acts xiii. 38. † Heb. x. 4.

fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with clean water."*

The belief of the imputation of the righteousness of Christ is no where indicated by the belief in Christ, but the belief of his divinity, and of all his teaching is the obvious force of the expressions. Thus St. John says: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God."† "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God!"‡ It is only by the constant use of the terms "believe *on* Christ" to express the receiving and resting on his merits, that this meaning is so readily attached to them by many readers of the Bible, whilst in the context they will be uniformly found to designate faith in the revelation made by Christ, and in the mysteries proposed by him to man. This divine faith was professed by Peter, in the name of the twelve, when he said; "Thou art Christ the Son of the living God;"§ and when he declared their unshaken adhesion, notwithstanding the incomprehensible promise of giving them his flesh to eat, and his blood to be drunk: "Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we have believed and have known that thou art Christ the Son of God."‖

Faith, then, in its general Scriptural acceptation, is the belief of what God has revealed. Confidence in the merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour is a virtue to be diligently cherished; but it is distinct from faith, although grounded on it. We should frequently look to the Cross with faith, calling to mind the sufferings of our adorable Redeemer, and remembering that his blood was shed to expiate our sins. Each of us should say with the Apostle: "I live in

* Heb. x. 22. † 1 John v. i. ‡ Ibidem 5.
§ Mat. xvi. 16. ‖ John vi. 69.

the faith of the Son of God who loved me, and delivered himself up for me."* When oppressed by the remembrance of our sins, our confidence should be awakened by reflecting that "his blood cleanseth us from all iniquity."† When the difficulties which present themselves in the path of salvation dishearten us, we should raise our drooping spirits by this consideration: "He that spared not even his own Son but delivered him up for us all, how hath he not with him given him all things?"‡ But we should not confound this confidence with faith, from which it is manifestly distinct.

* Gal. ii. 20. † 1 John i. 9. ‡ Rom. viii. 32.

CHAPTER IV.

FAITH ONLY.

Luther boldly asserted that faith alone suffices for justification: "Faith," he says, "justifies before charity, and without it."* "Faith does not justify, nay is not faith, unless it be entirely without even the least works."† Misapplying the words of our Redeemer in regard to the penitent, he maintained that love cannot precede the forgiveness of sins, but is a consequence flowing from it.‡ The natural inferences from these maxims were so revolting to every Christian feeling, and so manifestly opposed to the sacred oracles, that the reformer occasionally found it necessary to modify these broad assertions, by affirming that faith never exists without the accompaniment of the other virtues:§ and his followers very generally have adopted this modification. Melancthon, in the Apology for the Augsburg Confession, says that "we obtain the remission of sin by faith alone in Christ, not by love, nor on account of love, or of works, although love follows faith."‖ The Book of Concord, compiled in 1577, by André, Chancellor of Tubingen, and other Lutheran doctors, and adopted by the Lutherans, declares that "neither contrition, nor love, nor any other

* In c. ii. ad Gal.
† In iii. prop. t. 1 operum.
‡ Vide apud Bossuet, Histoire des Variations l. i. § xviii.
§ In c. xv. Gen.
‖ Apol. de justif. § 26.

virtue, but faith alone is the instrument whereby we can lay hold on and receive the grace of God, the merit of Christ, and the remission of sins."* Thus even those who admitted that these virtues should accompany faith, as its fruits and evidences, denied them all share in the justification of the sinner; whilst others, more strictly in harmony with the general tenor of their Master's teaching, maintained that they did not precede justification, but followed it. According to one theory, the sinner, before his heart is touched with compunction, or warmed with charity, lays hold by faith on Christ crucified, and obtains pardon; and being thus gratuitously justified without any regard to the dispositions of his soul, save his confidence in the Saviour; he becomes penitent, and he loves his God and Redeemer, whose bounty he has experienced: whilst the other presents him as uniting sorrow and faith in the very act of obtaining pardon, though faith alone, according to both theories, is the instrument of justification. Calvin contended that penitence arises from justifying faith;† but he was careful to deny to faith, which Luther had so extravagantly extolled, all efficacy or merit, and to make it a mere instrument, organ, or recipient, using for this purpose the similitude of an earthen vessel in which a rich treasure is deposited.‡

* Solid Declar. iii. de fidei justif. § 23.

† Inst. l. iii. c. iii. § 1. He admitted, however, that an initial fear in many precedes faith, namely, a feeling of terror excited by the announcement of divine vengeance against sin: § 2. this is followed by the assurance that all our sins are forgiven. In the sects it is no unusual thing, after years of profligacy, to assert the certainty of this forgiveness, and to specify the time and place when it was obtained.

‡ "Fides, etiamsi nullius per se dignitatis sit, vel pretii, nos justifi-

It is not easy to determine which theory is more consonant to the recognised standards of Anglican and Presbyterian belief. In the thirty-nine articles it is said: "that we are justified by faith *only* is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of consolation."* "By this phrase," says Newland, "is not to be understood faith as separated from good works, properly so called, but as it is opposed to the rites of the Mosaic law."† The Presbyterian Confession says: "faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is *the alone instrument of justification;* yet it is not alone in the person justified, but it is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love."‡ This is apparently favorable to the theory that supposes these graces and virtues as following justification, rather than existing prior to it.

In a charge, delivered to his clergy in 1839, Bishop McIlvaine strongly insists on the instant and perfect justification of the sinner, "the moment the hand of his faith touches the skirts of the robe of our blessed Redeemer's righteousness." In his treatise on Oxford divinity, he says: "that justifying faith is, indeed, the root of all christian virtues, so that they 'do all spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith,' we consider a most necessary truth, exceedingly to be insisted on with every soul to whom the gospel is preached. But that faith derives any of its justifying virtue from these fruits, which are not its life, but its evidences of life, we hold it of great importance

cat, Christum afferendo, sicut olla pecuniis referta hominem locupletat." Ibidem c. ii. § 7.

* Art. xi. † Analysis, p. 175. ‡ Ch. xi

to deny; and on the contrary, to maintain that, though working by love, as it must if living, faith is effectual for justification, simply as an act of embracing Christ, in all his offices, and benefits, and requirements, whereby the sinner lays hold of his promises and puts on the garment of his justifying righteousness."* He quotes the Homily of Salvation to prove the mere instrumentality of faith itself, and adds: "let it be remarked how carefully and strikingly the simple instrumental character of justifying faith is here exhibited; how, as a grace, or work, its efficacy is excluded."†

Mr. Newman, on the contrary, interprets the article as meaning only "that all is of grace." "Faith is said to justify, not that it really justifies more than the other graces; but it has this peculiarity, that it signifies in its very nature that nothing of ours justifies us, or it typifies the freeness of our justification. Faith heralds forth divine grace, and its name is a sort of representation of it, as opposed to works. Hence, it may well be honored above the other graces, and placed nearer Christ than the rest, as if it were distinct from them, and before them, and above them, though it be not."‡

From this passage, it appears that Mr. Newman is willing to give to the Articles a meaning compatible with the Catholic doctrine, which ascribes justification to grace, but requires in adults faith, compunction, fear, hope, and the conversion of the heart to God, as dispositions necessary for its attainment. Long before him, the learned Bishop Bull had observed: "the moderation of Bucer is greatly

* Oxford Divinity, ch. ix. p. 324. Note.

† Ibidem, p. 338.

‡ Lectures on Justification, p. 281. See also Tract No. 90. § 2.

to be praised, who declined on this point all controversy with the Papists."*

The Council of Trent, having stated the first movement of sinners towards God by faith, proceeds to explain the other sentiments and affections preparatory to justification, produced in them by divine grace. "Understanding themselves to be sinners, from the fear of divine justice, by which they are seized in a salutary way, they turn to the consideration of divine mercy, and are raised to hope, trusting that God will be propitious to them for Christ's sake, and they begin to love him as the fountain of all justice; and on that account they are excited to a certain hatred and detestation of their sins, namely to the penance which should precede baptism; finally, they purpose to receive baptism, begin a new life, and observe the divine commandments."†

The distinction between the Catholic doctrine and the opinions generally prevailing among Protestants, lies then in this, that, according to our belief, other dispositions besides faith are expressly required for justification, which, however, spring from faith, and concur with it to this end; whilst these dispositions are not required as antecedent by the terms of the Protestant formularies; and are denied to have any concurring power, or instrumentality, though acknowledged to be the fruits and evidences which necessarily follow. Besides, faith itself, in Catholic doctrine, means the assent of the mind to the whole revelation of God; whilst to Protestants it signifies the confidence and certain persuasion of the imputation of the righteousness of Christ to the individual believer. According to

* Harmonia Apostolica, Ch. 2.

† Sess. vi. cap. vi. de justif.

the Protestant system, the sinner is pardoned the moment he firmly believes that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to him; but if a true believer, justified by faith, he must, of necessity, abandon his evil ways: according to Catholic faith, he is roused to fear, encouraged to hope, moved to repentance, impelled to a change of life, and thus prepared finally to receive pardon. This, however, does not necessarily suppose a long lapse of time, for although the works of grace, like those of nature, are often gradual, God may in a moment touch the heart so as simultaneously to excite all those dispositions, and instantaneously to grant the boon of forgiveness.

In the Old and New Testament, forgiveness is promised to penitence. From Moses to the inspired author of the Apocalypse, all proclaim: "When thou shalt seek the Lord thy God thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart, and all the affliction of thy soul."* The Prophets, by the threats of divine judgment, labored to awaken sinners to a sense of their unhappy state. Jonas proclaimed to the sinful Ninevites the imminent destruction of their city, and they by fasting and weeping, sought to disarm divine justice. The king in proclaiming the fast said: "Let men and beasts be covered with sackcloth, and cry to the Lord with all their strength, and let them turn every one from their evil way, and from the iniquity that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and forgive; and will turn away from his fierce anger, and we shall not perish? And God saw their works, that they were turned from their evil way: and God had mercy with regard to the evil which he had said that he would do to them, and he did it not."† The hope

* Deut. iv. 29.

† Jonas iii. 8.

of forgiveness was held out to the people of Juda by Joel, on condition that they would humble themselves by penitential exercises, to appease their offended God: "Now therefore, saith the Lord: be converted to me with all your heart, in fasting and in weeping, and in mourning, and rend your hearts, and not your garments, and turn to the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, patient and rich in mercy, and ready to repent of the evil. Who knoweth but he will return and forgive, and leave a blessing behind him, sacrifice and libation to the Lord your God?"* Isaias pointed out the abandonment of sin, and the performance of works of charity as the means to ensure plenary forgiveness for the most grievous delinquents; "Wash yourselves, be clean, take away the evil of your devices from my eyes: cease to do perversely, learn to do well: seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge for the fatherless, defend the widow. And then come and accuse me, saith the Lord: if your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow: and if they be red as crimson, they shall be white as wool."†

That penance,‡ that is to say, the sorrow and humiliation of the sinner, is under the new dispensation a necessary disposition for forgiveness, we know from the infallible teaching of Christ himself. In his last address to his disciples, previous to his ascension, he said: "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead the third day: and that penance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all

* Joel ii. 8. † Isaias i. 16.

‡ Μετανοια pœnitentia: we need not here define the Scriptural force of this term, which certainly far exceeds its classic acceptation. Vide, Luke x. 13.

nations."* The answer of St. Peter to the Jews who "had compunction in their hearts" for the death of Jesus Christ, was conformable to this declaration: "Do penance,† and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins."‡ The humble acknowledgement of sin, not the persuasion that it is forgiven, is the condition assigned by St. John the Evangelist for ensuring pardon: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins."§ It is manifest, then, that repentance, or penance, is in the Gospel, as well as under the law, a condition for forgiveness, for which it more directly prepares the soul than faith itself. The publican who ventured not to lift his eyes to heaven, but striking his breast cried for mercy, was declared justified by the lips of Jesus. It was to the weeping penitent that our Divine Redeemer said: "Thy sins are forgiven thee,"‖ and if he subjoined: "Thy faith hath made thee safe, go in peace,"¶ it was to calm her agitated mind by the assurance of entire pardon, and to instruct us in the supernatural source of her tears. They were not the consequence of a mere human feeling of sorrow and of shame; but they proceeded from heavenly inspired faith, whereby she discovered the turpitude of sin, as well as the infinite mercy of her Saviour God. It was to the humbled thief, recognising the justice of the punishment which he was suffering, and rebuking the blasphemous partner of his fate, and imploring a favorable remembrance in the heavenly kingdom, that Christ gave the consoling promise of immediate beatitude. The Apostle St. Paul used indulgence towards the penitent and humbled Corin-

* Luke xxiv. 46. † Μετανοησατε. ‡ Acts ii. 38.
§ 1 John i. 9. ‖ Luke vii. 48. ¶ Acts, viii. 22.

thian; and St. Peter pointed out to Simon the magician, penance, the abandonment of sin, and prayer as the means of pardon: "Do penance therefore from this thy wickedness; and pray to God if perhaps this thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee."*

It may appear that the necessity of compunction and other virtues being now admitted, at least as necessary consequences of justification, it is of little importance to determine whether they must precede it or not, and what share they have in preparing the soul for it. If so, why has the world been convulsed to establish the doctrine of faith only? Why has it been alledged that the very essence of Gospel truth was at stake?† In reality the Reformers are convicted of having to no purpose magnified the justifying character of faith, since their followers have been forced by the shocking consequences of their principles, to admit in a different form the necessity of the virtues which they so strenuously excluded from all share in justification. The recent concessions of the Oxford divines plainly show that there was no just cause for the clamors excited on this subject. Yet it is important to maintain, as the Catholic Church does, the ancient faith once delivered to the Saints, in its primitive simplicity, and to preach forgiveness on the conditions on which it was announced from the beginning. By the adoption of a different method the sinner is led to make an effort of mind to persuade himself that he is justified through Jesus, and to attach comparatively but little importance to those exercises of humility and compunction, which are the

* Acts viii. 22.

† Luther did not hesitate to say, that if this point be ceded, the Reformation is at an end: "fallt aber die Lehre, so ist es mit uns gar aus." *Tisch-reden.*

fruits and safeguards of repentance. Dr. Pusey justly complains, that "by an artificial wrought up peace, it checks the deep and searching agony, whereby God, as in a furnace, purifies the soul."* Instead of remaining at the feet of Jesus, washing away with penitential tears the stains of many years, the sinner flatters himself that he would detract from the efficacy of the atonement, by supposing that his own humiliation and sorrow were necessary for its application. Instead of going forth from the place of temptation, ashamed and confounded at his weakness and perfidy, and weeping bitterly for having by his deeds, if not by his words, denied his Lord, he fixes his eyes on the Cross, and consoles himself by the soothing reflection that his sins are undoubtedly forgiven him. He cares not to repass in the bitterness of his soul, the years of his misspent life; he cares not to redeem his iniquities by alms, and his sins by mercy towards the poor: he cares not to bring forth fruits worthy of penance: but he deems it criminal to doubt whether any thing more is necessary on his part to secure the entire pardon of his sins. Dr. Pusey observes that in this system "to revert to past sins is to doubt of Christ's mercy. To bear a painful recollection of it is to be under the bondage of the law; to seek to efface it by repentance is weakness of faith; to do acts of mercy, or self-denial, or self-abasement, or to fast with reference to it, is to interfere with 'the freeness and fulness of the Gospel,' to insist upon them, is to place repentance instead of Christ."† Thus whilst abstractedly it is admitted that contrition must accompany or follow faith, its virtue is annulled; and a security is indulged, which to the humble believer must always appear an excess of pride and presumption.

* Pusey's Letter, p. 56. † Ibidem, pp. 74. 8. 54. 5.

CHAPTER V.

NECESSITY OF FAITH.

Inattention to the scope of an author must necessarily expose us to mistake his meaning, especially if the circumstances in which he wrote be widely different from those in which we are placed. Thus it has happened that many, not attending to the circumstances in which the epistle to the Romans was composed, have strangely misapplied the words of the apostle. To understand him correctly, we should represent to ourselves the rising church of Rome composed of converts from pagan superstition, and from Judaism—the Jews being at that time spread throughout the empire, especially in all the large cities. The doctrine of salvation through the atoning blood of a Man-God, crucified on Calvary, was "unto the Jews, indeed, a stumbling-block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness";* and the converts to the faith, although admiring in it the wisdom of God and the power of God, were not always entirely free from some sentiments, or views, not in perfect harmony with the belief of that mystery. Jealousies manifested themselves from time to time between those of Jewish and those of Gentile origin; and the abhorrence which the Jew had entertained for the profane heathen, and the contempt with which the polished Roman had been accustomed to view the Israelite, were

* 1 Cor. i. 23.

not always entirely absorpt in the common feeling of Christian fraternity. Hence the Jew claimed some superiority over the Gentile, for his privileges as one of the chosen people of God, the depositary of his oracles, the guardian of his law, the heir of his promises; whilst the Gentile attached some value to the sublime teaching of that philosophy by which Rome was raised above the barbarian. It was for the purpose of utterly rooting out these vain distinctions, and of humbling the pride of all, that the apostle wrote this sublime epistle,* in which he plainly shows that no work of the law, that is, no ceremonial observance, and no work done by a mere natural impulse or effort could avail to salvation; and that all, whether Jew or Gentile, were sinners, and needed the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

He placed before them, in the first instance, the enormous excesses into which the heathen philosophers, whose wisdom was vaunted, had fallen; and he then passed to show that the Jews, notwithstanding their high privileges, had been guilty of great prevarications; whence he concluded that all had sinned, and needed divine grace and mercy; and he pointed out Jesus crucified as the propitiation by which alone pardon could be obtained, and justice and salvation secured. These benefits are proffered by him not indiscriminately, or unconditionally, but to the believer, who by faith recognises and adores the crucified Redeemer. "Now without the law," he says, "the jus-

* "The Jews believed that justification belonged peculiarly to their nation, and that on account of the piety of their ancestors, their knowledge of the law, and the observance of its ceremonies; notions confuted in the epistles, (particularly to the Romans) and necessary to be known for our understanding the confutation."—*Institutes of Biblical Criticism, by Gerard.* 617.

tice of God is made manifest, being witnessed by the law and the prophets. Even the justice of God by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe in him, for there is no distinction. For all have sinned, and do need the glory of God. Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath proposed to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to the showing of his justice, for the remission of former sins, through the forbearance of God, for the showing of his justice in this time: that he himself may be just, and the justifier of him who is of the faith of Jesus Christ."* All this is evidently directed to establish the necessity of faith in order to justification, which is proffered to every one that believes, though not received by any whose belief does not produce repentance and conversion. The inference which the apostle drew, was that the Jews' boasting of the ceremonial observances was overthrown: "Where then is thy boasting? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. For we account a man to be justified by faith without the works of the law."† He indignantly asks, "Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also."‡ He insisted that the principle of justification and salvation must be common to both; and that therefore the believer, whether Jew or Gentile, was justified by faith: "For it is one God that justifieth circumcision by faith and uncircumcision through faith."§ But he described faith as productive of every sublime virtue. Having enumerated many of the ancient heroes, "who by faith conquered kingdoms, wrought justice,"‖ he described the sufferings of others "of whom the

* Rom. iii. 21. † Ibidem 27. ‡ Ibidem 29.
§ Ibidem 30. ‖ Heb. xi. 33.

world was not worthy,"* and who nevertheless patiently endured all, "being approved by the testimony of faith."†

To undeceive the Jews, who attached undue importance to the ceremonial observances of the law, St. Paul undertook to show that Abraham, their father, owed his acceptance with God to faith, rather than to circumcision. "For what saith the Scriptures, Abraham believed God, and it was reputed to him unto justice. Now to him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned according to grace, but according to debt. But to him that worketh not, yet believeth in him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reputed to justice, according to the purpose of the grace of God."‡ He observes that this was said before he had received circumcision, so that "he received the sign of circumcision a seal of the justice of the faith which he had being circumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe being uncircumcised, that unto them also it may be reputed to justice."§ Thus the supernatural principle of faith was the source of justice to this great patriarch; and circumcision served as a divine seal, confirming and testifying the justice of faith; and the same divine faith was to be for ever the source of justice to the uncircumcised Gentile converts, and to the circumcised converts from Judaism, so that Abraham might be the father of all the children of faith, and might extend the privileges of circumcision even to the uncircumcised, who emulate his faith: "and might be the father of circumcision, not to them only that are of the circumcision, but to them also that follow the steps of the faith, that is in the uncircumcision of our father Abraham."‖

As the faith of Abraham was accepted in place of

* Heb. xi. 38. † Ibidem 39. ‡ Rom. iv. 3.
§ Ibidem 11. ‖ Ibidem 12.

works,—as it was deemed well pleasing and worthy of reward, through this gracious acceptance of God, so faith is to be reputed to justice to all who believe. Here, then, is a position clearly at variance with the assertion of the Presbyterian Confession, that the faith of believers is not imputed to their righteousness. Faith is the principle of justification, through which peace of conscience is obtained, the soul attains a supernatural elevation, and the well-grounded hope of celestial glory is cherished: "Being justified therefore by faith, let us have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom also we have access through faith into this grace wherein we stand, and glory in the hope of the glory of the sons of God."* It does not, indeed, merit the boon; but it is graciously accepted through Jesus Christ, when it has the necessary qualities. The apostle insists on this supernatural principle of justification, that Jew and Gentile may elevate their thoughts above the ceremonial observances of the law, or the natural works of man, and seek a divine means of grace and glory. This principle is not, however, sterile: it produces every Christian virtue, and is, therefore, deservedly regarded as the great means of justification and salvation, since without it no other avails, and it places within our reach every means necessary to ensure them. "Our faith," says Newland, "must receive the whole gospel, the precepts as well as the promises of it, and regard Christ in his threefold character of a prophet to teach, a king to rule, as well as a priest to save us."†

The whole teaching of the Apostle is, then, directed to establish the necessity of faith, not as opposed to supernatural works, which, on the contrary, are its fruits, but as compared with any means, merely natural or legal. "The

* Rom. v. 1. † Analysis of Burnet. Art. x. p. 175.

works which the Apostle excludes from having any influence in the justification of sinners, are not works proceeding from faith, but works of law," as Macknight observes.* So far from extolling faith to the prejudice of the other virtues, he earnestly exhorts to their practice, especially in the three last chapters of this epistle, and elsewhere he declares: "if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."† The faith of which he spoke is the parent of this virtue, as he observes in his epistle to the Galatians, showing that the distinctions of Jew and Gentile are forgotten where this virtue is found: "for in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision: but faith that worketh by charity."‡ "It is to be carefully observed," says Macknight, "that he hath no where said, that believers are justified by faith alone."§

Unbelievers have argued against the truth of Christianity on account of the necessity of divine faith which it establishes, thereby, as they allege, placing salvation out of the reach of innumerable millions to whom the mystery of a crucified Redeemer was never proclaimed. To meet this difficulty, Macknight maintains that the faith of those who have not received an external revelation, may be acceptable to God, their inclination to know his will, and to do it, being regarded instead of more perfect knowledge.‖ There is no doubt that according to the opportunities of instruction, more explicit belief is required; and Catholic divines of great celebrity have maintained, that for those who have had no opportunity whatever of hear-

* Essay vi. on Justification, § i. † 1 Cor. xiii. 2.

‡ Gal. v. 6. § Essay vi. on Justification, § i.

‖ Ibidem § iii.

ing the gospel preached, salvation is attainable without the knowledge of its mysteries : yet this charitable sentiment supposes that those persons conceive divine faith by the interior light of grace, and from supernatural motives believe that God exists, and that he rewards those who seek him. It supposes the unreserved submission of the understanding to God, and consequently a disposition to receive with profound homage whatever he has revealed. Individuals thus divinely enlightened, amidst the darkness of heathenism, owe the grace which is given them to the atonement of Calvary, and if by faith, so imperfect in its development, they attain to salvation, it is in the name of Jesus they are saved. The learned commentator has not been as careful as those Catholic divines in qualifying his sentiment, though he unequivocally professes that none can be justified otherwise than by Christ: but the terms in which he describes faith, do not mark a supernatural and divine gift,* which is necessary to justification, as the

* "I have endeavoured to show, that the belief of the doctrines of revelation is not necessary to the justification of those who are destitute of revelation; and that neither the belief of any particular doctrine, such as that *Jesus is Christ the Son of God,* nor of any determinate number of doctrines, such as those contained in creeds and confessions, is necessary to the justification of all who enjoy revelation: because all have not an equal opportunity of knowing, nor an equal capacity to comprehend these doctrines: but that justifying faith consists in one's believing such doctrines of religion as God hath given him an opportunity and a capacity of knowing; and in his being at pains to acquire such a knowledge of these doctrines as his talents and opportunities enable him to acquire; whether he hath nothing but his own reason and conscience to direct him, or hath these faculties aided by an external revelation." He had said above, "this liberal doctrine the apostle Paul, if I mistake not his meaning, hath expressly taught Rom. iv. 11." !

whole reasoning of the Apostle clearly shows. The latitude which Macknight allows to those who have known the Christian revelation, is equally opposed to that captivity of understanding which St. Paul assigns as the triumph of gospel truth. The mercy of God may favorably regard such as are invincibly ignorant of some particular point of doctrine: but the whole body of revelation is sufficiently marked with the seal of divine authority to render it exceedingly credible, and we cannot admit that a creed less or more comprehensive may be professed according to each one's capacity and opportunity. Faith is one as God is one; and the deep, although often concealed, pride which opposes the revealed mysteries, cannot afford security to the rash mortal who pleads want of opportunity, or want of capacity. It is not required of us to comprehend, but with humble faith to believe, what God has revealed.

The necessity of faith is strongly declared by the Council of Trent: "Faith is the commencement, foundation, and root of all justification: without it, it is impossible to please God, and to come to the society of his children."* St. Augustin gives this view of faith: "the work is great, but from faith. I praise the work built up, but I see the foundation of faith: I praise the fruit of the good work, but I acknowledge the root in faith."† When St. Paul so strongly urged the necessity of faith, he was only repeating the maxim proclaimed by St. Peter before the council: "There is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved."‡ Having already showed the Jews that they were transgressors of the Mosaic law, and reproached the Gentiles with their grievous

* Sess. vi. c. viii. † In Ps. xxxiii. ‡ Acts iv. 12.

violations of the natural law, he insisted that neither could claim salvation on the score of justice. They must look to the atoning sacrifice of Calvary, and seek pardon through that blood which cleanseth us from all iniquity. If he did not urge at the same time the necessity of compunction for their sins, and of sincere conversion to God, it is because he was rather engaged in overthrowing Jewish prejudices, than in unfolding the dispositions of soul that prepare for justification. The prince of the apostles did not fail to admonish his hearers of that necessity, when he addressed the Jews, and exhorted them to embrace salvation through Jesus Christ: "Be penitent, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out."* The necessity of faith on which St. Paul insisted, so far from eecluding the other virtues, proves their necessity.

* Acts iii. 19.

CHAPTER VI.

GRATUITOUS CHARACTER OF JUSTIFICATION.

ALTHOUGH faith, fear, hope, sorrow, and love, concur to prepare the soul for justification, it is, nevertheless, undoubtedly true, that this is a gracious gift of divine mercy, to which no previous disposition entitles it. Nothing that the sinner can do to appease God, can give him a right to forgiveness; even those acts which proceed from grace do not give him a strict title, although they ensure the boon, inasmuch as God, in regard to the sacrifice of the cross, has mercifully promised pardon to the penitent. The language of the Analysis of Burnet is to the same effect: "Our faith, which includes our hope, love, repentance, and obedience, is the condition that makes us capable of receiving the benefits of this redemption."* Even Macknight writes: "The law which requires faith working by love in order to justification, effectually excludeth all boasting; because works proceeding from faith being imperfect, do not entitle him who performs them to justification. If such a person be justified, it must be by free gift; consequently he cannot boast of his justification as merited."† The Council of Trent thus clearly expresses the gratuitous character of justification: "We are said to be gratuitously justified, because none of those things

* Art. x. p. 178.

† Essay on Justification, § 1.

which precede justification, whether faith or works, merit the grace itself of justification; for 'if it is grace, it is not now of works; otherwise,' as the same apostle says, 'grace is no more grace'."* When the ancient fathers speak of the sinner meriting justification, they use the term in an enlarged sense, as implying a disposition of soul, which, according to the merciful economy of God, is followed by this boon. Thus, St. Augustin writes: "The very remission of sins is not without some merit, since faith obtains it: for faith is not without merit. With this faith the publican cried: O God, be merciful to me a sinner; and he went home justified by the merit of faithful humility: since he who humbles himself shall be exalted."† St. Cyprian in like manner says: "Whilst the Pharisee indulged self complacency, the publican rather merited to be sanctified, who placed not his hope of salvation in the confidence of his own innocence, since no one is innocent, but prayed, humbly confessing his sins."‡ This merit is plainly no other than the fulfilment of a condition, to which the divine mercy is promised: "A sacrifice to God," cried the penitent Psalmist, "is an afflicted spirit: a contrite and humble heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."§ It is to mercy the penitent appeals; he pleads not his own merits: he alleges not the depth of his sorrow, or the severity of his penance, as entitling him to pardon; but acknowledging his sin, he awaits from the clemency of his judge the sentence of forgiveness promised to the humble and confessing sinner: "I said, I will

* Sess. vi. cap. viii.

† In ep. cv. nunc. cxciv. ad Sixtum, § 9.

‡ De Orat. Domin. § Ps. l. 19.

confess against myself my injustice to the Lord, and thou hast forgiven the wickedness of my sin."* "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all iniquity."†

The gratuitous character of justification plainly appears from this circumstance, that it is owing entirely to the divine mercy that sin is pardoned on any condition whatever. Bishop Mc'Ilvaine is careful to observe that faith "is not effectual in the application of Christ's righteousness, *because* it is a virtue, or works by love, but simply because it is the hand of an unworthy beggar reached out unto and taking hold on Christ."‡ In the Catholic view the sinner is a beggar, humble and wretched, appealing to a munificent Lord, whose bounty he acknowledges himself guilty of having abused: he is a culprit, self-condemned, offering no extenuation of his guilt, and expressing his grief for the outrage committed against the Sovereign Majesty, and protesting his firm determination never more to repeat his transgressions. Recognising a father in his judge, he appeals to his affection with which he has so ill corresponded, and offers to submit to the greatest humiliations, if he can only find shelter in his father's house: "Father,"

* Ps. xxxi. 5. † 1 John, i. 9.

‡ Oxford Divinity passim. In reference to this system Macknight observes: "A doctrine of this kind, which implies an impossibility, and from which many dangerous consequences have been drawn by the Antinomians, ought not to be received; more especially as it hath no foundation in Scripture. For none of the inspired writers hath called faith a hand which layeth hold on the righteousness of Christ. They do not even say, that Christ's righteousness is counted or imputed to believers; far less that they are made perfectly righteous thereby." Essay vi. on Justification, § ii.

he cries, "I have sinned against Heaven and before thee, I am not now worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants."*

The merits of Jesus Christ may be called strictly and properly the cause of our justification. St. Thomas of Aquin expressly says: "the passion of Christ is the proper cause of the remission of sins in three distinct ways."† By the Council of Trent it is styled the *meritorious* cause, to distinguish it from the dispositions or preparation of heart, required on our part, as also from the divine act by which we are in reality justified.—"The meritorious cause is our Lord Jesus Christ, who, when we were enemies, through the exceedingly great charity wherewith he loved us, by his most holy passion on the wood of the cross, merited for us the grace of justification, and satisfy to God the Father in our stead."‡ The Article of the Church of England may receive the same meaning: "We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings.§" Newland in the Analysis of Burnet explains it of the meritorious cause of our justification.‖ Dr. Pusey interprets it in the same way.¶ St. Thomas again says: "By faith, likewise, the passion of Christ is applied to us to receive its fruit, according to that passage in the third chapter to the Romans: 'whom God proposed a propitiator** by faith in his blood.' But the faith by which we are cleansed from sin is not a formless faith, which may exist together with sin, but it is faith formed by charity: that so the passion of Christ may be

* Luke xv. 18.
† Sum. iii. par. qu. xlix. art. i. Resp.
‡ Sess. vi. cap. vii. de justif.
§ Art. xi.
‖ Art. x. p. 175.
¶ Letter, p. 41.
** So it is quoted by St. Thomas.

applied to us not only as to the understanding, but also as to the affection. And in this way, likewise, sins are forgiven in virtue of the passion of Christ."* Mr. Faber represents it as the peculiar distinction of the Church of England and other reformed churches, to make the procuring cause of justification to be the extrinsic righteousness of Christ, and charges Catholics with making the procuring cause to be our infused and therefore internal righteousness.† Bishop M'Ilvaine gives this as the sum of our doctrine: "We are justified not by what Christ has done for us externally, when in the days of his flesh he offered himself a sacrifice for our sins, which would be to be justified by a righteousness extrinsic and accounted to us; but by what Christ works in us internally, by his spirit."‡ This leads me to believe that there is, as Bossuet has well observed, more misunderstanding than difference of sentiment among us on this point;§ or at least that the ambiguity of words has considerably increased the difference, whatever it may be. Catholics can have no hesitation in acknowledging Jesus Christ as the *procuring* cause of their justification; and certainly this term is not stronger than the term meritorious, as explained in the Council of Trent. It is not stronger than the language of St. Thomas of Aquin: "Christ by his passion satisfied for the sin of the human race, and thus man was liberated through the justice of Christ."‖ In this sense the cause is certainly extrinsic. If no more were at issue, we should join hands

* iii. par. qu. xlix. art. 1. ad 5.

† Faber's Primitive doctrine of justif. Pref. xviii. xx.

‡ Oxford divinity, p. 47.

§ Il y a plus de mal entendu que de véritables difficultés dans cette dispute. *Histoire des Variations,* l. iii. §. xviii.

‖ Sum. par. iii. qu. xlvi. art 1.

as brethren, whom the misconception of terms had unnecessarily divided. Do Catholics pretend that any thing which they do justifies them? God forbid! With regard to the cause of justification, then, let all contention cease.* Each one of us says with the Apostle: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."† To the faithful we repeat that Christ "of God is made unto us wisdom, and justice, and sanctification and redemption: that, as it is written: He that glorieth may glory in the Lord."‡

Justification is sought for and obtained only through the merits of Jesus Christ: "neither is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved."§ We acknowledge, most unequivocally and sincerely, that "we are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath proposed to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to the showing of his justice, for the remission of former sins, through the forbearance of God, for the showing of his justice in this time: that he himself may be just, and the justifier of him who is of the faith of Jesus Christ."‖ Through him alone "the one

* Bossuet well observes; "Qui de nous n' a pas toujours cru et enseigné que Jesus Christ avoit satisfait surabondamment pour les hommes, et que le Père éternel, content de cette satisfaction de son Fils, nous traitoit aussi favorablement que si nous eussions nous-memes satisfait á sa justice? Si on ne veut dire que cela, quand on dit que la justice de Jesus Christ nous est imputée, c'est une chose hors de doute, et il ne falloit pas troubler tout l'univers, ni prendre le titre de Réformateurs pour une doctrine si connue et si avouée. Histoire des Variations, l. iii. § xxxiv.

† Gal. vi. 14. ‡ 1 Cor. i. 30. § Acts iv. 12.

‖ Rom. iii. 24.

Mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a redemption for all,"* we hope to find access to the Father. No prayers, or tears, or penitential works can blot out sin, except as conditions or occasions of applying to us the merit of his atonement. The very dispositions for justification are the fruits of grace. Hence "the Council of Trent declares, that the commencement of justification itself in adults is to be derived from God, through Jesus Christ, by his exciting grace, that is, by his vocation, whereby they are called, without any merit on their part: so that, they who by their sins were turned away from God, are disposed by his exciting and helping grace to turn themselves towards their justification, by freely assenting to the same grace, and co-operating with it, so that, God touching the heart of man by the illumination of his holy Spirit, neither man himself is totally inactive, in the receiving of the inspiration, since he has the power of rejecting it; nor yet can he by his free will, without the grace of God, move towards justice: whence, when in the sacred Scriptures, it is said: 'Be converted to me, and I shall turn to you,' we are admonished of our liberty; when we answer: 'Convert us, O Lord, to thee, and we shall be converted;' we confess that we must be excited by grace."† This referring the origin of all the dispositions for justification to the grace of God, which excites, enlightens, and moves the sinner, and the acknowledgement that these dispositions do not merit justification itself, which is the free gift of God granted through the merits of Jesus Christ, place the gratuitous character of justification in the most conspicuous point of view. Man must believe, fear, hope, repent, resolve; but justification

* 1 Tim. ii. 5. † Sess. vi. c. v.

is not due to these dispositions, which merely remove the obstacles to its reception, that incredulity, pride, impenitence would otherwise oppose. The Council did not hesitate to cry anathema to "whosoever shall say that without the previous inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and his assistance, man can believe, hope, love or repent, in the necessary manner to receive the grace of justification."*

I know not what more can be desired to vindicate the divine glory in the justification of man. The work is acknowledged to be one of pure mercy—the only meritorious cause is avowed to be the death of Jesus Christ, whom his Heavenly Father has made a victim of sin, that we might become just through him: "Him that knew no sin, for us he hath made sin, that we might be made the justice of God in him:"† the dispositions whereby our soul is prepared for this grace, are excited and produced by him, although with our free co-operation. In every respect, then, the work is gratuitous, and redounds to the praise of his grace.

It is not faith, nor sorrow, nor any virtue that justifies; but God himself mercifully pardons sin and sanctifies the soul, graciously accepting the humiliation and sorrow of the sinner, to whom he applies the merits of his own beloved Son. "The efficient cause of our justification," says the Council of Trent, "is our merciful God who gratuitously washes and sanctifies, sealing and anointing us with the Holy Spirit of promise who is the pledge of our inheritance."‡

The freedom of the human will in accepting the grace of justification, and in co-operating with the graces which

* Sess. vi. Can. iii. de justif. † 2 Cor. v. 21.

‡ Sess. vi. Cap. vii. de justif.

move it to faith, hope, contrition and conversion, seemed to the Reformers to detract from the gratuitous character of this divine gift. They represented fallen man as utterly destitute of all capacity for good, and of any active power to correspond with grace, and fancied they glorified God by ascribing to Him solely the justification of man, and the production of those dispositions necessary for that purpose. "In things spiritual and divine, which appertain to the salvation of the soul," Luther says, "man is like the statue of salt, into which the wife of the patriarch Lot was changed, yea, he is like a trunk of a tree and a stone, a lifeless statue, that has no use of eyes, mouth, or any of the senses, or of the heart."* "Faith," he says, "is the most excellent and difficult of all works, by which alone you will be saved, although you should be constrained to be without the rest. For it is the work of God, and not of man, as Paul teaches; he produces other works with us and through us; he does this one work in us and without us."† His followers did not shrink from the avowal of the same principles. In the Declaration of Faith, contained in the Book of Concord, they say that "man can contribute nothing whatsoever to his conversion;"‡ and they affirm that "the sacred Scriptures ascribe the conversion of man, faith in Christ, regeneration, renovation. . . simply to the divine operation alone, and to the Holy Spirit."§ Calvin expressly maintains, that the work of conversion entirely belongs to God, and "nothing good proceeds from the will, until it has been reformed;

* In Genes. c. xix. In the Analysis of Burnet it is observed: "Luther at first held the complete slavery of the will." Art. xvii. p. 229.

† De Capt. Babylon. op. tom. ii. p. 284.

‡ Solid. Declar. ii. de lib. arb. § 43. § Ibidem § 20.

and after its reformation, the will, inasmuch as it is good, is from God, and not from us."* The Article of the Church of England on Free Will is couched in terms that do not necessarily exclude the co-operation of man:† whence opposite opinions prevail among its members, some of whom maintain that "as an individual can contribute nothing to his creation, the same impotency should be inferred with respect to his conversion."‡ The Article seems to be framed according to the Calvinistic hypothesis.§ The Presbyterian Confession says, that God calls his elect by "renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good; and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace."‖ This freedom is not easily understood, whilst they are declared to be determined by the almighty power of God; and furthermore man is said to be "*altogether passive therein* until being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it."¶

It is clear that all active co-operation of the human will is expressly excluded, and that the freedom which is asserted is no more than a complacency produced by the same Almighty power by which the will is determined. To exclude this abuse of words, whereby the liberty of man is professedly admitted, but really denied, the Council of Trent cried anathema to "whosoever should say, that the free will of man when moved and excited by God does not in any way co-operate, by assenting to God who ex-

* Inst. l. ii. c. iii. 8.
† Article x.
‡ See Analysis of Burnet, art. xvii. p. 241.
§ Ibidem, p. 263.
‖ Confession of Faith, ch. x. n. 1.
¶ Ibidem, n. 2

cites and calls, whereby he may dispose and prepare himself for obtaining the grace of justification: and that he cannot dissent if he wish, but that as some inanimate thing he does nothing whatsoever, and is merely passive."* According to Catholic doctrine God by his grace stands at the door of our heart, and knocks for admittance, and our liberty consists in the power of opening to receive him, or refusing him entrance. We may hear his voice, and yet harden our hearts. The sinner is therefore inexcusable, because the means of conversion being proffered to him, he voluntarily and freely rejects the grace whereby he could be saved. The benignity of God leads him to penance, but he despises the riches of divine goodness, and patience, and long suffering, and according to the hardness of his impenitent heart, treasures up for himself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the just judgment of God.† The penitent, on the contrary, freely yielding to grace, grieves for his sins, which he might still love with a perverse will; abandons the occasions of them, which with criminal temerity he might still frequent; humbly sues for pardon, which he might flatter himself to obtain at some future time, whilst in the mean time he continued in the career of vice. He is moved, and excited, and drawn by the sweet influence and attractions of grace; but not determined by Almighty power, because God has created him a free agent, and made his salvation dependant on the exercise of his liberty in corresponding with grace.

How, may we ask, can our co-operation be supposed to detract from the gratuitous character of justification? The liberty of our will is the gift of God, and its good employment, under the influence of his grace, must redound to

* Sess. vi. Can. iv. de justif. † Rom. ii.

his glory. When he has arrested the sinner in his evil course, and substituted a heart of flesh for his former stony heart; when he has changed his affections, and breathed into him that pure and holy love, which gives him a loathing for the gross objects of sense; when he has drawn him powerfully, but sweetly, to his service, is it derogatory to his glory to avow, that man has humbly accepted the pardon and gifts bestowed by his clemency and bounty? It was freely, but at the call of Jesus, that Matthew arose from his toll-house: it was in joyful obedience to his command that Zacheus descended from the tree to receive him: it was at his glance that Peter melted into tears: and who will pretend that he is not glorified in the power which he exercised over their wills, and with which they so freely corresponded? The tears of Peter and the alms of Zacheus took nothing from the gratuitous character of the pardon and salvation which he granted them.

As the intimate sense of each individual under the influence of grace, and the whole tenor of Scripture prove that we are not necessarily drawn to God, and as this truth is not now assailed, I forbear any special vindication of it.* It is sufficient to observe that the exciting grace is gratuitously given, and that the variety observed in the dispensation of grace is necessarily to be referred to the unsearchable counsels of God: "he hath mercy on whom he will; and whom he will he hardeneth."† Pharaoh, justly abandoned to the hardness of his own heart, freely drew upon himself the vengeance by which he was overtaken: Paul, struck to the earth, as he hurried towards Damascus, thirsting for Christian blood, freely yielded to

* See *Theologia Dogmatica*, vol. ii. pp. 54, 286, and 368.

† Rom. ix. 18.

the mercy which invited him. The sinner who is moved to tears for his excesses, does not divide with Christ the glory of his justification; for he knows and feels, that, but for divine mercy and grace, he would still be wandering in the hard ways of sin; and he is prompted to invite others to yield to the same grace, that they may experience the same tender mercy. With the Psalmist he says, "I will teach thy ways to the unjust, and the wicked shall be converted unto thee, O Lord."* With the Apostle he repeats: "A faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief."† What glory has not redounded to God from the conversion of Augustin, who, after a long abuse of his free will by resisting grace, freely yielded to its influence, and loudly proclaimed the mercy which had pursued him, and won him to virtue!‡ Every thing, then, in the Catholic doctrine shows forth the gratuitous character of justification, and promotes the divine glory. According to the profound remark of Möhler, the Catholic gives glory to God, by acknowledging that no effort of his own can merit grace; whilst by recognising the liberty of his will, in the humble acceptance of grace, and co-operation with it, he thanks God for having it in his power to glorify him.§

* Ps. l.

† 1 Tim. i. 15.

‡ See Confessions of Augustin.

§ Symbolik, l. 1. ch. iii. § xi.

CHAPTER VII.

MEANING OF THE TERM JUSTIFICATION.

Before we treat of the nature of justification, it is necessary to speak of the term by which it is designated in Scripture. The application of human language to express things divine, must necessarily be imperfect; and great errors will ensue, if the attempt be made to define the meaning of terms applied to supernatural works, by their etymology, or popular, or technical acceptation. Yet the main argument of those who deny the inherent nature of Christian righteousness is of this fallacious character. It is said that the term *justify* is forensic, and means a judicial clearance, or acquittal. This meaning, however, cannot be grounded on its use by classic authors, for it generally means to *deem just*, or *suitable;* sometimes to *determine;* occasionally to *acquit;* and even *to condemn.** The Scriptural use of the term by the Septuagint, and by the writers of the New Testament, is appealed to, as it is known that this is often widely different from its acceptation in classic authors.

In the Greek version of the book of Deuteronomy it is found in a passage wherein judges are charged to "give the prize of justice to him whom they perceive to be just, and him whom they find to be wicked, they shall condemn of wickedness."† This means in general that judges

* Vide Thesaurum linguæ Græcæ ab Henrico Stephano. Δικαιοω.

† וְהִיצְּדִיקוּ אֶת־הַצַּדִּיק וְהִרְשִׁיעוּ אֶת־הָרָשָׁע δικαιώσωσι. Deut. xxv. 1.

should render justice to the party who has right in his favour; it does not exclusively mean that they should pronounce a sentence of acquittal, for it is not confined to a criminal trial, but it regards any species of litigation between men, as the words immediately preceding show: "If there be a controversy between men, and they call upon the judges." It is clear that this signification of the term cannot be alleged in reference to the sinner, on whom sentence is not pronounced according to his merits, but contrary to his acknowledged deserts.

In attacking the Oxford divines, who understand justification as implying the communication of a divine gift, whereby the soul is sanctified, Bishop M'Ilvaine asks: "How will that sense appear in such a passage as that wherein it is said, 'He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are an abomination to the Lord'* ... how could it be an abomination to the Lord, to justify the wicked, by making him personally holy, by an infusion of personal righteousness?"† But as the passage has no relation whatever to the act of God in justifying the wicked, it is vain to seek the application of the term in the sense which it bears when applied to such an act.‡

The term *justify* in the text objected means to approve of, vindicate and sustain the wicked man in his evil course, either by individual expression of sentiment, or by official acts. Its meaning when applied to God's justifying the sinner, must be altogether different, for it is con-

* Prov. xvii. 15. Vide etiam Isaiah v. 23.

† Oxford Divinity, ch. iii. p. 60.

‡ See Remarks on the Oxford Theology, by Vanbrugh Livingston, p. 81

stantly represented as a glorious exercise of the divine prerogative of mercy: "To him that worketh not, yet believeth in him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reputed to justice according to the purpose of the grace of God."* It is vain to seek an analogous meaning where the sense is manifestly and diametrically opposite. To justify the sinner, by approving his evil conduct, or suffering him to escape the just rigor of the law, is an abomination to the Lord; yet He himself glorifies his mercy in justifying the sinner, by exciting his faith, and moving his heart to compunction, and pardoning his sins, and making him just from unjust, and adorning his soul with the gifts of grace and sanctity.

The Greek term δικαιοω is used by the Septuagint translators to express the idea of defending and maintaining the rights of the weak, as in the passage of Isaias, which is rendered in our version "defend the widow."† St. Luke employs it to signify the attempt of the lawyer who questioned our Saviour, to maintain his ground, to "justify himself,"‡ by asking: Who is my neighbor? But if we would know the force of the term, as employed to express the dealings of God towards the sinner whom he pardons, we must go beyond all these examples, and consider the term in its immediate connexion with other terms expressing more fully this act of divine mercy.

It is an erroneous supposition that the sacred writers ordinarily use the imagery of judicial procedure to express the act of God justifying the sinner. On a close examination it will be found that this imagery is most generally employed to represent the accountability of man, and especially the great scrutiny, or general judg-

* Rom. iv. 5. † Isai. i. 17. ‡ Luke x. 29.

ment of all mankind at the end of time. To support the mere forensic or external acceptation of the term, Gerhard, a Lutheran divine of the seventeenth century, boldly asserts,* that, in order to designate the entire work of justification, the Scripture employs only terms borrowed from judicial forms. He cites Ps. cxlv. 7, where judgment is mentioned: "Who executeth judgment." This, however, regards the exercise of divine providence in the relief of the oppressed, and punishment of the oppressor, as the words plainly indicate: "Who executeth judgment for them that suffer wrong, who giveth food to the hungry." He says that the Judge is designated John v. 27; but the passage manifestly regards the judgment after the general resurrection: "He hath given him power to do judgment, because he is the Son of man. Wonder not at this, for the hour cometh wherein all that are in the grave shall hear the voice of the Son of God." He refers us for the tribunal to Romans xiv. 10, but again it is that of the last day: "we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." The accused in Rom. iii. 19, is not the sinner in the act of being justified. The Apostle had cited several passages of the Old Testament in which the corruptions of men were set forth, and he observed that these crimes must have prevailed among the Jews, since the language was addressed to them, so that they could not plead innocence, but in humble acknowledgement of guilt, they should cast themselves entirely on divine mercy. "We know that what things soever the law speaketh, it speaketh to them that are in the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may be made subject to God." There is little judicial imagery

* Loc. Theolog. ed. Cotta, tom. iii. p. 6.

in this passage, and nothing directed to represent the act of justification. The accuser in John v. 45, is Moses at the tribunal of the Father, arraigning the unbelieving Jews: "Think not that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuseth you, Moses, in whom you trust. The witnesses (Rom. ii. 15.) are the thoughts of men, listening to the dictates of natural reason, by which they discriminate between virtue and vice: "Who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness to them, and their thoughts between themselves accusing, or also defending one another." The judicial process is not referred to in Col. ii. 14, but the abrogation of the ceremonial law by the death of Christ on the cross. The passage affords us a sublime idea of the intimate operation of the spirit of God, pardoning sin, and giving life to the sinner: "And you, when you were dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh; he hath quickened together with him, forgiving you all your offences: blotting out the hand-writing of the decree that was against us, which was contrary to us. And he hath taken the same out of the way, fastening it to the cross." The Apostle teaches them that the bond or note of hand by which the decrees of the law held men fast, was taken out of the way, effaced and annulled, after the manner in which instruments were wont to be annulled, by driving into them a nail, the cross being the means by which this bond was rendered void.* This, then, is not a judicial process, but the annulling of an instrument by which men should otherwise have been bound. The advocate 1 John ii. 1, is rather *an intercessor*, παρακλητον one who presents his sufferings in our

* Ἐξαλείψας τὸ καθ' ἡμῶν χειρόγραφον τοῖς δόγμασιν.

behalf, not to extenuate our sins, but to atone for them. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just; and he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world." The passage quoted from the Psalms xxxi. 1, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered," has no appearance of the form of a judicial sentence. The Psalmist had lain in silence oppressed by the weight of sin, until at length he gave vent to his grief, and acknowledged against himself his injustice to the Lord. The assurance of pardon which he received from Nathan filled his heart with deep gratitude; and he expressed the consolation which succeeded the silent bitterness of his soul, by exclaiming that it was a blessed thing to obtain forgiveness and mercy. This was the expression of his own feelings, and not the sentence of his Judge.

Bishop McIlvaine insists that the judicial sense must necessarily be admitted, "where justification is spoken of as the opposite of condemnation," and cites Rom. v. 18, and Rom. viii. 23. In the first passage the Apostle says: "As by the offence of one, unto all men to condemnation: so also by the justice of one, unto all men to justification of life." "Here most evidently," he observes, "justification imports a judicial clearing from the imputation of guilt, in the precise sense and degree in which condemnation imports a judicial fastening of the imputation of guilt."* This reasoning seems to suppose that men are condemned for the sin of Adam without being really partakers of his guilt, as they are alleged to be justified in Christ, without being in reality partakers of his righteous-

* Oxford Divinity, p. 61.

ness. For us, who believe that in him all have sinned, the comparison implies a real communication of justice. Mr. Newman also adopts this view: "In the same sense," says he, "in which we are unrighteous or displeasing to God, by nature, we are actually righteous and pleasing to him in a state of grace."*

I know not how those who maintain the total depravity of human nature, and the inherent corruption of man, as consequent on the sin of Adam, can consistently deny that justice is really communicated in virtue of the merits of Christ. The condemnation in no case supposes any communication of guilt on the part of the judge, who merely declares the fact of guilt, and decrees its legal punishment: but a sentence of acquittal supposes legal innocence. However the apostle does not use a term indicating a mere acquittal. He calls it the "justification of life," on which the learned Protestant Commentator Bloomfield, remarks: "Δικαίωσις ζωῆς seems to mean such justification as should restore them to the grace they had forfeited; literally *pardon for life*."† The apostle himself had just before declared the vast difference between condemnation and justification, and how far the blessings of the latter, really received and enjoyed, surpass the evils entailed by the former: "for if by one man's offence death reigned through one: much more they who receive abundance of grace, and of the gift, and of justice, shall reign in life through one Jesus Christ."‡ Macknight, Moderator of the Church of Scotland, an interpreter of some celebrity, explains this as meaning "that they shall have infinitely greater happiness in their new life, than they had miseries and sorrows in the state into which they were brought

* Lect. pp. 98. † In locum. ‡ Rom. v. 17.

through Adam's disobedience, expressed by the reigning of death in this verse and in v. 14."* "The term" adds Bloomfield, "expresses height of felicity, with an adjunct notion of exalted honour."† There is no warrant in the comparison, or in the context, for understanding justification to mean a mere judicial acquittal, unaccompanied by any moral change, or sanctification.

The other passage is from Rom. viii. 23. "Who shall accuse against the elect of God? God that justifieth. Who is he that shall condemn? Christ Jesus that died, yea, that is risen also again, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." On this text Bishop M'Ilvaine remarks: "Here is the idea of a court, a tribunal, a person arraigned; the accuser is called; the whole is judicial; and if, by the condemnation spoken of, we could understand an act of the judge making the accused guilty by the infusion of unrighteousness; then also by the justification spoken of, we might understand an act of the judge making the accused just by an infusion of righteousness; but if this interpretation would be absurd in the former case: so must it be in the latter; for the two must evidently be interpreted alike."‡ In reply to this mode of reasoning, may we not ask:—Does then God condemn and justify in like manner? He condemns for demerits, for crimes wilfully committed against his law: Does he justify, purely on the score of individual merit? Is Bishop M'Ilvaine prepared for this consequence? The apostle had spoken of the persecutions to which the Christians were exposed, and to encourage them to bear these evils with fortitude, he had observed that "all things work together for good for those who love God, who according

* In locum. † Ibid. ‡ P. 61.

to his purpose are called to be saints," and he had declared to them that this eternal purpose of God, with his fore-knowledge, directed the call to the Christian faith, the justification, and the final beatitude of his chosen servants. Then he cries out: "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who is against us? He that spared not even his own Son: but delivered him up for us all, how hath he not also, with him, given us all things?"* It is as if he said: 'let the persecutor rage: he can do us no real evil:' and then to comfort the trembling Christian, who feared his own weakness, he reminds him of the precious gifts of grace, whereby his weakness is strengthened. What matters, then, that the Christian should be accused as an enemy of society and of the human race? God defends him from the charge. What condemnation need he dread from a human tribunal?† Christ pleads for him at his Father's throne. "Who then" he exclaims, "shall separate us from the love of Christ?" and he proceeds to

* "The apostle now concludes with a triumphant expression of his full assurance of the happy result of their present trials. For God having given such a stupendous proof of his purpose of love towards them, as to give his own son to suffer in their stead; it is impossible to think that any thing shall ever wrest them out of his hands: but he will support them under all afflictions, defend them against all enemies; and having begun a good work in them, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."—YOUNG.

† Rosenmüller observes: "Propius munit Christianos adversus criminum judicia, quæ ipsis innocentibus intentabantur. Qui tandem sunt, qui eos accusare audent? nempe homunciones.—Si etiam damnantur Christiani a malis judicibús, innocentes tamen moriuntur, quia Christus pro illis est mortuus." In locum. Macknight says: "It is reasonable to think that the apostle had the believing Jews in his eye here as well as the Gentiles, because their unbelieving brethren accused them of apostacy from the law of Moses." In locum.

declare in detail that nothing could effect such a separation. If any one prefer understanding the accusation as made at the tribunal of God, and as regarding the actual sins of men, it may be even so explained; God justifieth his elect in pardoning their sins, and giving them all things with Christ. There is nothing in the passage that reduces it to a bare forensic act: on the contrary the abundance of the gifts of grace, whereby we are strengthened, and prepared for the severest sufferings, is clearly expressed.

There are indeed passages of Scripture in which the term justify is equivalent to acquit, but it will be generally found that in these cases the forensic figure is sustained; and it supposes purity of conscience, and does not express the remission of sin. Thus Christ our Lord says; "every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account of it on the day of judgment. For, by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words condemned."* This does not here express forgiveness, but acquittal on the ground of innocence. So also the apostle writes: "not the hearers of the Lord are just before God; but the doers of the law shall be *justified*."† In neither case is the term referred to the exercise of divine mercy towards the repentant sinner. It represents the result of a judicial scrutiny into the words and actions of men, such as shall take place at the day of judgment. Justice, strict and rigorous, must then be exercised, and is most appropriately designated under juridical emblems: but mercy will precede, and the sceptre of divine clemency more aptly designates its exercise.

The employment of the term in its forensic acceptation, in circumstances where the imagery is forensic, cannot

* Matt. xii. 36. † Rom. ii. 13.

limit its meaning when used to express the pardon of the sinner. By his crime he has forfeited grace, and incurred the penalty of eternal death. Justice dooms him to everlasting torments. The whole judicial procedure has closed, and the execution of the sentence is awaited. The culprit has no hope but in the clemency of his Sovereign, and he appeals earnestly and confidently for its exercise. When by this pardon is designated the justification of the sinner, we attach to the term a signification different from the forensic use. It is a reprief, a reversal of a sentence which was legally pronounced, and not the sentence itself. He is justified, though found guilty: he is freed from the punishment, though the crime stands confessed: he is washed from the stain by the hand of the offended Lord. As it would be absurd to press the legal acceptation of the term, as if he were guiltless, so it is wrong to apply it merely so far as to imply that he should be held guiltless, when the accompanying terms express the washing from defilement, the raising from death to life, the communication of heavenly gifts, by which the soul is made the temple of God.* It is not to be wondered that a term should be borrowed from forensic use, and employed to express a far sublimer act than that which it originally designated. Mr. Livingston justly remarks: "If it be not denied that justification is a work of Almighty grace, in behalf of a fallen and condemned creature, it will, we

* Rosenmüller admits that the term implies in many instances an aggregate of blessings: "Interdum verò δικαιοῦσθαι et δικαιοῦν in V. et N. T. ita late dicuntur, ut *omnem omnino Numinis favorem*, quo et pœnæ homini remittuntur, et beneficia omnisque felicitas conferuntur, simul complectatur Is. xlv. 25 et in hac epistola passim. Hinc. Gal. iii. 8, 9, δικαιοῦσθαι et εὐλογεῖσθαι (*felicitatem adipisci*) permutantur, quæ εὐλογία ibidem v. 14, describitur. In Rom. iii. 20.

think, be readily acknowledged, that the import of the term, as used in the sacred volume, cannot possibly be illustrated by any of the analogies of a court or tribunal of law; and that its scriptural meaning cannot, with the slightest propriety, be received in what is called a forensic or judicial sense."* Images may aid to form an idea of things divine; but faith must consider how imperfect is every external emblem. The judge who acquits a culprit, or the sovereign who pardons a convict, but faintly represents God loosing the bonds of sin, and restoring the sinner to the privileges of a child. The human verdict of acquittal is a public attestation of legal innocence: but God, the supreme Judge, effaces the guilt of the acknowledged culprit, and confers anew the purity which had been forfeited. The pardon of the sovereign may restore the attainted to civil life and privileges; but the Creator of Spirits quickens the soul that was dead in sin, and imparts the privileges of a living member of the kingdom of God. The father who clasps to his bosom the returning prodigal, and clothes him with the choicest garment, and puts on him the ring, and makes the hall resound with the music of his joy for the recovery of his lost son, and his resuscitation from the dead, gives us another touching emblem of divine mercy. But all falls far short of the reality. The soul dead to sin, lives to God: there is a new creation more stupendous than that which first called the material world into being: a secret work of divine power is performed in the inmost man, the sinner is made just by the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit. "We are justified, that is we are rendered just by the grace of God."†

* Remarks on the Oxford Theology, p. 79.

† Aug. l. ii. de pecc. meritis et remissione c. xxxiii.

CHAPTER VIII.

INHERENT JUSTICE.

JUSTIFICATION is described by the Fathers of Trent as "the transferring of man from the state in which he is born, as a child of the first Adam, to the state of grace and adoption of the sons of God, through the second Adam, Jesus Christ our Saviour."* They gather this from the Apostle, who expresses his gratitude for the call to the Christian Church in these terms: "Giving thanks to God the Father, who hath made us worthy to be partakers of the lot of the saints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the son of his love, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the remission of sins."† The state of fallen man is aptly styled a state of darkness, both on account of the withdrawal of supernatural light, and of the influence and power of the Spirit of darkness, who blinds the sons of men, and impels them to evil. The Church is the kingdom of the Son of God, in whom the Father is well pleased. By grace we are constituted members of this body, citizens of this kingdom: we receive through his blood redemption, the remission of sins. The children of wrath become the children of God: from darkness we pass to light; our sins are forgiven, we receive the appli-

* Sess. vi. cap. iv. † Col. i. 12.

cation of the great atonement, and are thus prepared for heaven.

The remission of sins is the cancelling of them,* the casting of them away as into the depth of the sea;† the washing of the soul clean from their defilement,‡ and its restoration to a state of purity. It is impossible that the guilt which has in reality been contracted, should not have been incurred. Omnipotence itself cannot place the soul in that state of innocence which she has forfeited by wilful transgression. But God can pardon the offence, remit the punishment, remove the stain of guilt which has remained after the act, and purifying the soul from sinful affection, change her, and make her an object of his favor and love. We are not able to conceive the nature of the defilement which a spiritual substance contracts; but we feel that the prevaricating soul is hateful and defiled before God: and though we cannot form an accurate idea of the purification which God effects by pardoning sin, yet we are sensible that his power can constitute the soul in a state of purity resembling that of unstained innocence. The Apostle aids us to conceive it, when having specified various crimes which exclude from the kingdom of God, he adds: "And such some of you were, but you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Spirit of our God."§ This washing cleanses the soul, and makes her whiter than snow. Though her sins may have been red as scarlet, she appears white as wool: though they have been red as crimson, she is white as snow. The wounds inflicted by sin are covered and healed: the corruption is drawn off and dried

* Acts iii. 19. † Micheas vii. 19.
‡ 1 Joan. i. 7, 9. § 1 Cor. vi. 11.

up, and health and soundness succeed infirmity and disease. The culprit is acquitted, not on the ground of innocence, but on the plea of repentance, strengthened by an appeal to the mercy of the Judge, whose power reaching the inmost soul, purges the guilt which he pardons, and gives to repentance the privileges and attributes of innocence. This is the sublime idea of justification from sin, presented to us in the divine Scriptures. It is the remission of its guilt, the removal of its deformity, the effacing of its stain. It is accompanied by and identified with sanctification, a celestial gift which adorns the soul and renders her holy. It is effected by the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Divine Spirit; and implies an intimate communication of grace, which elevates the soul to a supernatural state, and fits her for glory hereafter. Protestant writers speak of the effects of the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, in terms almost paramount;* and if they be not mere words, we cannot see why they should contest the Catholic doctrine. Mr. Newman, with the Oxford School, unequivocally admits the inherent character of justice: "The gift of righteousness is not an imputation, but an inward work."† Elsewhere he says: —"Scripture expressly declares that righteousness is a divine inward gift."‡ Dr. Pusey says: "Justification consists in God's inward presence."§ "It is the habitation in us of God the Father, and the word Incarnate, through the Holy Ghost."‖ "Christ is our righteousness by dwelling in us by his Spirit, justifies by entering into

* See Charge of Bp. M'Ilvaine.

† Lectures on Justif. pp. 34, 39.

‡ Ibidem p. 154.

§ Pusey's Letter to Bp. of Oxford, p. 42.

‖ Ibidem, p. 47.

us, continues to justify by remaining in us."* Mr. Newman, indeed, affects to distinguish his view of justification from our doctrine; but it is not difficult to perceive that his aim is, here as elsewhere, to shun the imputation of Romanism, whilst in other terms he admits the truth which the Church teaches.† He says expressly that "justification by inherent righteousness," or, as in the second edition of his celebrated Tract No. 90, "by a righteousness within us," is taught in the Homilies.‡

"Justification," say the Fathers of Trent, "is not the mere remission of sins, but it is also the sanctification, and renewal of the interior man by the voluntary receiving of grace and gifts. Whence man of unjust is made just, and of an enemy becomes a friend, so as to be heir, according to hope, of life everlasting."§ The texts referred to in this passage fully sustain the idea which the Council gives of justification. "When the goodness and kindness of God

* Pusey's Letter to Bp. of Oxford, p. 51.

† Mr. Livingston seems to have mistaken the views of the Oxford divines, whom he represents as maintaining "that sinners are justified simply by the communication or infusion of God's grace in the righteousness of faith," p. 83. His own opinion is that "by man's justification the substance of faith, which is the gift of God, is implanted in his heart; and this according to the word, is accounted to him as his righteousness," p. 87. This is one of the views of Luther: "faith itself," he says, "is our formal justice.'" In c. ii. ad Gal. Mr. Newman expressly says: "This is really and truly our justification, *not faith*, not holiness, not (much less) a mere imputation; but the very presence of Christ." *Lectures on Justif.* p. 167. "It is not faith, not renovation, not obedience, not any thing cognizable by man, but a certain divine gift in which all these qualifications are included," p. 159.

‡ Tract No. 90, § 11, p. 77, American edition.

§ Sess. vi. cap. vii.

our Saviour appeared; not by the works of justice which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the laver of regeneration and renovation of the Holy Ghost, whom he hath poured forth upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour: that, being justified by his grace, we may be heirs according to hope of life everlasting."* In addition to the remission of sins, by justification, we are born anew of the Holy Ghost, made children of God, renovated by his divine influence, by the communication of himself, "made partakers of the divine nature,"† by his presence within us, and made his holy temples. Thus are we justified, and sanctified, and made heirs of life everlasting, according to hope, which will be realized, provided we retain with fidelity the gifts bestowed on us.

This is what has been termed inherent justice, which is so styled, not as if it were natural to us, or any thing which we possessed as of ourselves; but because it is really given us by God, and implies a real change in the condition of our soul. It is the creation of a new heart, and the renewal of rectitude of spirit within us. It is a transfer from death to life, wherein the mercy and power of God are displayed, in the resuscitation of the sinner, in his elevation to a supernatural state, and in the communication of heavenly gifts which enrich and adorn the soul. "God, (who is rich in mercy,) for his exceeding charity wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together in Christ, (by whose grace you are saved,) and hath raised us up together, and hath made us sit together in the heavenly *places* through Christ Jesus, that he might show in the ages to come the

* Titus iii. 4. † 2 Peter i. 4.

abundant riches of his grace in his bounty towards us in Christ Jesus."* I cannot persuade myself that those who appear horror-stricken at the idea of inherent justice, have an accurate conception of its meaning. When they represent it as "a doctrine of *merits* in opposition to *grace*, of *works* in opposition to *faith*," when they brand it as "the abomination of desolation,"† they surely mistake altogether its nature and character. It is loudly proclaimed by us to be the gift of God, not merited by any effort of man: we have nothing which we have not received. To God essentially belongs the glory of the gift, the excellence whereof serves only to his greater praise. It is his Spirit that dwelleth in us,‡ and that pours forth his charity in our hearts.§ He "hath blessed us with spiritual blessings in Christ, as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and unspotted in charity. Who hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children through Jesus Christ unto himself; according to the purpose of his will: unto the praise of the glory of his grace, in which he hath graced us (*made us grateful and acceptable*) in his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the remission of sins, according to the riches of his grace, which hath super-abounded in us."‖ The soul in the state of grace is invested with a certain celestial beauty and dignity: the virtues which she exercises externally, but faintly reflect the internal splendor with which the sun of justice invests her: she is the spouse of Jesus Christ, whom he has loved, and for whom he has delivered himself: she has been washed from the stains of sin in his blood. She is in reality, as she is

* Eph. ii. 4. † See Bp. McIlvaine's work, passim.
‡ Rom. viii. 11. § Ibidem v. 5. ‖ Eph. i. 3.

styled, the beloved child of God. What is there in this conception which detracts in the least degree from the divine glory, and from the merits of Jesus Christ? Is it more glorious for God to cover sins, than to cancel them; to regard the sinner as just, than to make him so in reality? Is the merit and efficacy of the price of our ransom less apparent when the stains of sin are washed away by the current of atoning blood, than when they are supposed to be merely passed over in reference to its effusion? Shall we have a less sublime idea of this mystery of mercy, when we believe it to have merited for us the regeneration and sanctification of our souls, by an intimate operation of grace, a new creation, than in regarding it as leaving us in our original condition, and changing only our external relations? If those who reject the idea of inherent justice would ponder well the force of the terms as used in the Church, they would, doubtless, find that the divine goodness in the wondrous work of human justification and sanctification is more admirably displayed, when conceived in the communication of actual justice and sanctity, than in any way merely extrinsic. We "receive abundance of grace, and of the gift and of justice," and thus we "shall reign in life through Jesus Christ."* This is not the justice which the Apostle repudiated, when he said: "that I may gain Christ, and may be found in him not having my justice, which is of the law, but that which is of the faith of Christ Jesus, which is of God, justice in faith."† He rejected justice derived from the Jewish law, as is manifest, not that which flows from Christ, and by which we are really made just.

The Jews "not knowing the justice of God, and seek-

* Rom. v. 17. † Phil. iii. 8.

ing to establish their own, have not submitted themselves to the justice of God; for the end of the law is Christ, unto justice to every one that believeth."* Their own justice is that which they sought to establish on account of their fidelity in ceremonial observances, whilst they rejected Christ, whom all the ancient types prefigured, and who was the end of the law. Thus they forfeited that justice which is the peculiar privilege of believers. How unjust is it to apply passages like these, which have an obvious reference to the unbelieving Jews, and to legal justice, to Catholics who believe in Christ, as the Lord and Redeemer of men, who rest on him all hopes of grace and salvation, and who claim no legal or natural justice, but ascribe wholly to the gift of God, and the merits of Christ, that supernatural justice, no otherwise our's, than as the alms belongs to the beggar who has received it from the bounty of a benefactor! Bishop M'Ilvaine says that faith "holds out the empty hand of a poor miserable worthless beggar."† Catholics cannot object to this comparison; but does it not detract from Divine goodness to say, that the poor beggar receives nothing? We consider the justified man as a beggar clothed with a robe of justice, which divine bounty has bestowed on him. There is surely no room left for pride, "for who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received; why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it!"‡

Those who so vehemently deny that justification is inherent, freely acknowledge the inherent character of sanctification. Bishop Beveridge says: "The acts of justification and sanctification are two distinct things; for the one

* Rom. x. 3. † p. 511. ‡ 1 Cor. iv. 7.

denotes the imputation of righteousness to us; the other denotes the implantation of righteousness in us."* Faber complains that "the Church of Rome and Mr. Knox have alike confounded together, the righteousness of justification, which is perfect, but not inherent, and the righteousness of sanctification, which is inherent, but not perfect."† This reproach might be equally directed against Luther and Melancthon, who were ignorant of this distinction,‡ invented by the ingenuity of subsequent writers to evade the plain proofs which Catholics adduced from Scripture of the inherent quality of justice. We understand by justification, the passing from the death of sin to the life of grace, which we believe to be effected by an intimate operation of God in the soul of man, and by a communication of a divine gift which makes him just and holy. This we call sanctification and justification, because we find both terms used conjointly by the Apostle St. Paul; "but you are sanctified, but you are justified,"§ and because we believe that no man is justified without the communication of sanctifying grace. The justification of the sinner is beautifully compared to the shedding of light, by which the darkness is dissipated, for God by the same act imparts grace and pardons sin.‖ Calvin himself acknowledges that sanctification and justification are constantly

* On the Article of Justification-Eleventh.

† Prim. Doct. of Justif. pp. 36 and 23.

‡ "Les Luthériens d' à présent conviennent eux-mémes que ces choses sont confondues par Luther et par Melancthon, (Solid. repet. Conc. p. 686 Epit. art. ibid. 185); et cela dans l' Apologie, un ouvrage si authentique de tout le parti." Bossuet, Histoire des variations, l. iii. § xxxv.

§ 1 Cor. vi. 11.

‖ St. Thomas, 1. 2æ. qu. cxiii. art. vi.

united,* and are simultaneously received, and are inseparable.† Sanctification is admitted to be an intimate operation of the Spirit of God; "sanctification being," as Beveridge states, "God's act in us whereby we are made righteous in ourselves."‡ Why, then, should the idea of infused justice be rejected with so much vehemence, whilst every argument adduced against it is of equal force against sanctification? It is God who "hath given the pledge of the Spirit in our hearts:"§ it is the Spirit of God that dwelleth in us.‖ We are "justified by his grace,"¶ when renovated by the Holy Ghost.

Much has been said of the subtilty and vanity of scholastic distinctions; and yet the whole modern doctrine of justification is made to depend on its distinction from sanctification,** which is a subtlety not found in the Scriptures, and equally unknown to the first Reformers and the Schoolmen. "This distinction," Mr. Newman does not fear to say, "IS NOT SCRIPTURAL. In truth, Scripture speaks of but one gift which it sometimes calls *renewal*, sometimes *justification*, according as it views it, passing to and fro, from one to the other, so rapidly, so abruptly as to force upon us irresistibly the inference, that they are *really one*."†† "Justification and sanctification are sub-

* "Neque tamen interea negandum est, quin perpetuò conjunctæ sint ac cohæreant duæ istæ res, sanctificatio et justificatio." Antidot. in Conc. Trid. Opus. p. 702.

† "Sicut non potest discerpi Christus in partes, ita inseparabilia esse haec duo, quae simul et conjunctim in ipso percipimus, justitiam et sanctificationem." Inst. l. iii. c. xi. 6.

‡ Beveridge's Sermons, No. 74.

§ 2 Cor. i. 22.

‖ 1 Cor. iii. 16.

¶ Tit. iii. 7.

** Oxford Divinity, p. 62.

†† Newman's Lect. pp. 42, 43, also pp. 120, 129.

stantially the same thing—described in Scripture, as parts of *one gift*, properties, qualities, or aspects of one."* Yet the same learned writer, wishing to appear to differ from us, whilst in reality he agrees with us, makes distinctions which are scarcely intelligible: "If the justifying word be attended by the spiritual entrance of Christ into the soul, justification is perfectly distinct from renewal, with which Romanists identify it."† "The righteousness on which we are called righteous, or are justified, that in which justification results or consists—this *justifying principle*, though *within* us, as it must be, if it is to separate us from the world, yet is not *of* us, or *in* us, not any quality or act of our minds, not faith, not renovation, not obedience, not any thing cognizable by man, but a certain divine gift, in which all these qualifications are included."‡ Would it not appear that Mr. Newman, when writing these last words, had before him the Council of Trent, which says: "in justification itself man receives through Jesus Christ on whom he is engrafted, all these things simultaneously infused, together with the remission of sins, namely faith, hope, and charity?"§

In the Analysis of Burnet's Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles it is observed: "On this point, the difference between us seems a debate about words, since what they call remission of sins we call justification, and what they call justification, we call sanctification."‖ Though there is some inaccuracy in this statement, it can scarcely be doubted that the controversy might be easily terminated, if the meaning of the terms were well defined and under-

* Newman's Lect. pp. 42, 67.
† Ibidem, p. 170.
‡ Ibidem, p. 159.
§ Sess. vi. cap. vii. de justif.
‖ Art. xi. p. 179.

stood. In the passage already quoted, the Council of Trent has clearly determined the meaning of justification to be not merely the remission of sins, but also the sanctification and renewal of the interior man. To what purpose, then, is a groundless controversy excited, and the unity of Christian faith destroyed by the invention of distinctions not necessary to preserve the integrity of divine truth? Let debates of words cease; and let us "with one mind and mouth glorify God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

* Rom. xv. 6.

CHAPTER IX.

IMPUTED JUSTICE.

The doctrine of justification by faith only, so generally advocated by Protestants, has led most of them to maintain that justification is no more than the accounting or reckoning just those who in themselves are sinful and defiled. This has been called *imputed* justice; the occasion of the epithet being taken from the epistle of St. Paul to the Romans, in which he celebrates the faith of Abraham, which was reputed or imputed to him unto justice. But instead of saying that the faith of the Christian is reputed unto justice, they have preferred saying that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the believer unto justification; thus establishing as a leading principle of faith what an eminent divine of the Church of Scotland admits to be without any warrant in Scripture.* Mr. Newman styles it "an unreal righteousness, and a real corruption."†

"Faith," says the Presbyterian Confession, as already quoted, "receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification," but it observes that God does not justify his elect "by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to their righteousness, but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them, they receiving and resting on him and his righteousness by faith."‡

* Macknight Comm. in Rom. iv. 2.

† Lectures on Justification, p. 61. ‡ Ch. xi.

The Anglican articles are more cautiously couched: "We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith; and not for our own works or deservings."* This may account for an ambiguity which is discoverable in many of the writings of divines of this communion on this subject, and which has often led to great discrepancies, that, at bottom, are scarcely more than conflicts of words. Faber, relying on the Latin version of the Article, in which *propter* meritum and *per* fidem is read, interprets it as meaning, "that in the sight of God we are justified meritoriously, *on account* of the sole righteousness of Christ; while *through* faith we are justified no further than *instrumentally* or *mediately*."† This view is adopted by Bishop M'Ilvaine. If this be borne in mind, much of what is said against the Catholic faith will lose all its point; and where we appear most widely to differ, we may be found almost to coincide. According to the teaching of the Council of Trent, Catholics hold that "the meritorious cause of our justification is the most beloved and only begotten Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, who, when we were enemies, through the excessive charity wherewith he loved us, by his most holy passion on the wood of the cross, merited justification for us, and satisfied for us to God the Father."‡ In its solemn definitions, the Council did not reject the imputation of the justice of Christ, which, in a true and Catholic sense, it implicitly admitted; but it justly anathematized whoever should assert that "men are justified by the *mere* imputation of the justice of Christ, or the *mere* forgiveness of sins, to the exclusion of grace and charity, which is spread abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost,

* Art. xi. † Faber's Prim. Doc. of Justification.

‡ Sess. vi. cap. vii. de justif.

and is inherent in them: or even that the grace by which we are justified is merely the favor of God."* Our objections are against this *mere* imputation,† as we believe that the merits of Christ are effectually imputed to us, and that real justice is mercifully communicated by God, "whereby he makes us just, gifted wherewith we are renewed in the spirit of our mind, and not only are accounted just, but are called such, and are just in reality, receiving justice in us, each one according to the measure which the Holy Ghost imparts to each according to his good pleasure, and according to the peculiar disposition and co-operation of each."‡ "They whom God's sovereign voice pronounces just," Mr. Newman observes, "forthwith become just. He declares a fact, and makes it a fact by declaring it. He imputes, not a name, but a substantial *word*, which, being engrafted in our hearts, is able to save our souls. God's word effects what it announces."§

I am inclined to believe that the advocates of imputed justice often confound the *cause* of our justice with its *nature*. The Council of Trent has accurately distinguished various causes, meritorious, instrumental, and formal, adopting for greater accuracy the language of the schools. But if scholastic distinctions be unacceptable to modern ears, we can, without departing in the least degree from the doctrine of the Council, admit that the cause of our justification is extrinsic, for every grace and merit

* Sess. vi. Can. xi. de justif.

† Bellarmin shows that imputation in a Catholic sense can be admitted, but observes, that this mode of speaking is not common in the Fathers. l. ii. de justif. cap. vii. vide et M'Ilvaine, ch. v. p. 160.

‡ Sess. vi. cap. vii. de justif.

§ Lectures, pp. 86, 87, and the whole of Lecture III.

flows from the cross.* It is on account of Christ crucified that we are deemed righteous, and not for any thing that we have of ourselves. "We are justified by Christ alone," writes Mr. Newman, "in that He has purchased the gift; by faith alone, in that faith asks for it; by baptism alone, for baptism conveys it; and by newness of heart alone, for newness of heart is the life of it."† Thus far we unite with those who proclaim the mystery of the atonement, the virtue of the cross, the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, and who set aside all self-righteousness. And surely when we add, that, in virtue of the merits of our crucified Redeemer, God really justifies us by communicating his sanctifying grace, we detract nothing from the mystery of mercy, which we so loudly proclaim. This is not the justice of man, but the gift of God, whereby man is made just.

"Doubtless," writes Mr. Knox, "the Church never loses sight of the merits of our blessed Saviour; but she confides in them, not as a substitute for internal grace (in justification) but as an infallible security that this grace shall be freely communicated to all who candidly ask it."‡ Our belief of the imputation of the merits of Christ to us for the remission of our sins, and for sanctification and salvation, is not grounded on any doubtful phrase, but on the clear testimony of the Apostle, that "Christ Jesus... of God, is made unto us wisdom, and justice, and sanctification, and redemption, that, as it is written, He that glorieth, may glory in the Lord."§ Not only does the first aid of divine grace proceed from the virtue of his

* Mr. Faber is not correct in styling our own righteousness "the procuring cause of our justification."

† Tract No. 90, § 2.

‡ Knox's Remains, vol. i. p. 517.

§ 1 Cor. i. 30.

cross, but we need its sanctifying and saving influence at every step which we make in our journey to the mountain of God.* From it issues the divine virtue which heals the maladies of the soul that defy all natural remedies: from it proceeds that strength whereby the justified man is enabled to advance in the ways of justice. The commencement, progress, and end of our career to glory must be ascribed to it; and when in death we prove victorious over the enemy, it is God who makes us triumph in Christ Jesus.

All the texts which establish the mystery of Redemption and atonement, prove that the merits of Christ are applied to us, since it is only through Him that we can in any way be acceptable to the Father. "He is the propitiation for our sins," and "there is salvation in no other name." What then on this point is the question at issue between us and our separated brethren? It is whether the imputation be merely extrinsic. It is not whether we are justified by our own righteousness, or by the righteousness of Christ. God forbid. We have no righteousness but what we receive through his merits. The question is whether we receive any, or are merely treated and regarded as just, without being really made such.

We are not accustomed to use the terms, "imputed righteousness of Christ," because they are not used in Scripture, and because others express more strongly our entire dependance on the merits of his passion and death.

* Bishop McIlvaine strangely misstates the Oxford principle, which is on this point Catholic, as if we worked out our salvation, with less dependence on Christ crucified, and greater reliance on our own righteousness, in proportion as we advance in sanctification. Vide Oxford Divinity, p. 80.

Neither do we ordinarily say, that faith is imputed to justice, though this phrase is Scriptural: but we express the truth which it conveys, in language that in present circumstances is less liable to be misinterpreted.

The Apostle St. Paul having commended the faith of Abraham, which God reputed to justice, observes: "Now it is not written only for him, that it was reputed to him unto justice, but also for us, to whom it shall be reputed, if we believe in him, that raised up Jesus Christ our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up for our sins, and rose again for our justification."* We may observe with Macknight: "As it is no where said in Scripture, that Christ's righteousness was imputed to Abraham, so neither is it said any where, that Christ's righteousness is imputed to believers."† We may further observe, with Barclay, that "that sentence or term, (so frequently in their mouths, and so often pressed by them, as the very basis of their hope and confidence,) to wit: the imputed righteousness of Christ, is not to be found in all the Bible."‡ Bloomfield,§ acquiesces in the observations of Macknight, and explodes this imputed righteousness. Catholics, rejecting this mere imputation of the righteousness of Christ, acknowledge that "we are justified by his blood;"‖ but this justification is real and effectual, cancelling sin and imparting sanctity. The contrast which Bishop McIlvaine presents will not be found to be just: "the issue he says, "lies between justification by the *righteousness of Christ imputed*, and justification by *our own righteousness inherent*."¶ Inherent justice is not our own, as it were originating with us, or the fruit and reward of any natural

* Rom. iv. 23. † In Rom. iv. 2.
‡ Barclay's Apology, Prop. viii. § vii. pos. 1.
§ In loc. ‖ Rom. v. 9. ¶ Oxford Divinity, p. 325.

effort.* It is the justice of Christ, because merited for us by his passion and death. To present a proper view of the question at issue, it should be narrowed to this point: nominal justification by the extrinsic imputation of the righteousness of Christ—real justification by the intimate application of his merits to our souls.

"In St. Paul's sense," says Alexander Knox, who is regarded by some as the precursor of the Oxford movement, "to be justified is not simply to be accounted righteous; but also and in the first instance to be made righteous by the implantation of a radical principle of righteousness."† "What I am impressed with," says he elsewhere, "is, that our being reckoned righteous before God, always and essentially implies a *substance* of righteousness *previously* implanted in us: and that our Reputative Justification is *the strict and inseparable result of this previous efficient Moral Justification.* I mean: that the reckoning us righteous indispensably pre-supposes an inward reality of righteousness, on which this reckoning is founded." Again:—"How completely this system sweeps away the merely forensic system, leaving it neither root nor branch, I need not say more to illustrate."‡ "God pronounces us to be righteous, simply because he has MADE us so."§

To sustain his doctrine of imputative justice, Calvin,‖ relied on the passage of St. Paul to the Romans, wherein he cites the beginning of the thirty-first Psalm: "To him

* Sess. vi. cap. vii. de justif.

† Treatise on Redemption and Salvation in Remains of Alexander Knox, published in 1834, vol. ii. p. 60.

‡ Treatise on Justificat. in Remains, vol. i. p. 306, 311, and 315.

§ British Critic, No. lxvii. p. 89. Review of Remains ,of Alex. Knox.

‖ Inst. l. iii. c. xi.

that worketh not, yet believeth in him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reputed to justice according to the purpose of the grace of God. As David also termeth the blessedness of a man, to whom God reputeth justice without works: Blessed are they, whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord hath not imputed sin."* In this passage, however, no mention is made of the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, which Calvin and his followers assert; but faith is said to be reputed to justice, which they formally deny.† The object of the Apostle was to prove the necessity of divine faith, as the principle of justification, to the exclusion of mere natural works, or ceremonial observances, in which he denied any title to be found to the gift of justice. "The works," observes Macknight, "which the Apostle excludes from having any influence in the justification of sinners, are not works proceeding from faith, but works of law."‡ Justification being pardon granted by the divine mercy to the sinner, is not the reward of works; but is bestowed gratuitously on the believer, whose faith is accepted unto justice. He uses the testimony of David to show that he had acknowledged and celebrated the Divine mercy, by which a mantle is cast over sin, and pardon being granted, it ceases to be laid to the charge of the sinner. It was foreign to the purpose of the Apostle to dwell on the divine gifts which accompany this pardon, as he only proposed to show the gratuitous nature of the boon, granted to the penitent believer, contrary to his demerits. It is in vain for Calvin to allege, that the Apostle speaks, not merely of a particular result

* Rom. v. 5. † Supra.

‡ Essay vi. on Justification, Sect. i.

of justification, but of its entire effects; since the assertion is gratuitous, and is disproved by other passages, wherein the Apostle tells the faithful, "You are washed, you are sanctified, you are justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God."*

The other passage which Calvin objects, is from the second epistle to the Corinthians: "God indeed was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing to them their sins."† This proves that the sacrifice of Christ is the means of our reconciliation with God, whereby our sins cease to be laid to our charge: but it does not show that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us to justification. It points out the victim of atonement; it designates the pardon consequent on its oblation, by a phrase which expresses it with reserve;‡ but elsewhere the Apostle assures us, that Christ "hath appeared for the destruction of sin, by the sacrifice of himself,"§ and that he "was offered once to exhaust the sins of many."‖

The testimony of St. Bernard is alleged by Bishop M'Ilvaine after Faber: "What can all our righteousness be before God? Shall it not, according to the prophet, be viewed as a filthy rag; and if it be strictly judged, shall not all our righteousness turn out to be mere unrighteousness and deficiency? Yet who shall bring any accusation against the elect of God? To me, it is sufficient for all righteousness only to have Him propitiated, against whom only I have sinned. Every thing which he shall have decreed not to impute to me, is as if it had never been. Freedom from all sin is the righteousness of God. The mere indulgence of God is the righteousness of man.

* 1 Cor. vi. 11. † 2 Cor. v. 19.

‡ By the figure called Μειωσις. § Heb. ix. 26. ‖ Ibidem 28.

Saith the Apostle, if one died for all, then were all dead; meaning that the satisfaction made by one, should be imputed to all, even as one bare the sins of all; so that there should not be found one distinct person who incurred the forfeit, and another who made satisfaction; because truly the head and the body are one Christ. The head satisfied for its members: Christ for his own bowels."* These sentiments of this illustrious doctor of the church are strictly in accordance with Catholic principles, and are by no means favourable to the novel views of the Reformers. In a spirit of true humility, he acknowledges the imperfection of human works, and flees to divine mercy to supply our deficiency. No reference being given by Bishop M'Ilvaine, I am not able to determine with precision the place whence the objection is taken, but I believe several passages to be united in one, without much regard to their coherence.

In the fifth sermon on the words of the Prophet Isaiah, St. Bernard says: "Our lowly justice, whatever it may be, is correct, perhaps, but not pure, unless, perchance, we believe ourselves better than our fathers, who, with not less truth than humility, said, 'All our justices are as the rag of a menstruous woman.' For how is that justice pure, where as yet fault must be found? In the mean time the justice of men may appear correct, provided, however, they do not consent to sin, so that it do not reign in their mortal body."† St. Bernard had just quoted the text of the Psalmist, "Thy justice is as the mountains of God;" and having extolled the infinite sublimity of Divine jus-

* Quoted by Faber in Prim. Doct. of Just. pp. 155, 158, by McIlvaine on Oxford Divinity, ch. iv. p. 124.

† Sermo V. De Verbis Isaiæ Prophetæ. Vol. ii. p. 149.

tice, he proceeded to remark that our justice is lowly and imperfect, since even our good works are full of imperfections: and he applied, as was his custom, the words of Scripture to express this sentiment. We are, he said, far from the happy state of the first man, who did not experience the rebellion of the flesh: still farther from the perfection of the angels, whose justice is far from that of God. "They are just nevertheless, but by Him, not before Him: by his gift, not in comparison with Him." Thus, whilst acknowledging human imperfection, and that man cannot be justified in comparison with God, he avows true justice in man, derived from God, of whose mercy it is the gift.

Another passage occurs in his first sermon on the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin, which may also have been had in view by Mr. Faber: "Truly what has been done, cannot be undone: but when He does not impute it, it will be as if it were not. Which the Prophet also considering, says: Blessed is the man to whom the Lord hath not imputed sin."* The obvious meaning of St. Bernard is, that the pardon of God frees us from sin and its punishment, although the fact of our having sinned it is beyond Omnipotence itself to alter. In his sixty-first sermon on the Canticle of Canticles, he says: "Lord, I will remember thy justice alone, for it also is mine; for thou art made to me justice from God."† This harmonizes perfectly with the Catholic doctrine, which acknowledges no justice in man, unless that which is derived from God, and granted in regard to the merits of Christ.

In his treatise against Abelard, St. Bernard assails the error of this rash man, who denied that man had been under the power of Satan, and that the Son of God had be-

* In Festo Annunc. Serm. I. § 1. † Serm. LXI. in Cantica.

come man to rescue him from bondage. He insists that Christ has paid our ransom: "Man was the debtor: man discharged the debt. 'For if one,' says the Apostle, 'died for all, then all were dead,' meaning that the satisfaction of one should be imputed to all, as that one bore the sins of all: so that there should not now be found a distinct person who incurred the penalty, and another who made satisfaction, because the head and the body are one Christ. The head therefore satisfied for the members, Christ for his own bowels, since, according to the gospel of Paul, by which the falsehood of Peter (*Abelard*) is shown, having died for us, he hath quickened us together with him, forgiving you all your offences: blotting out the handwriting of the decree that was against us. And he hath taken the same out of the way, fastening it to the cross, despoiling the principalities and powers."* The whole reasoning of the holy doctor is directed to establish the mystery of redemption, as the meritorious cause of pardon and justice: "Being thus rescued from the power of darkness," he adds, "I do not fear that I shall be repelled by the Father of lights, being justified gratuitously in his Son. He it is who justifieth, who can condemn? He will not condemn the just man, who had compassion on the sinner. I have called myself just, but with his justice. Which is that? Christ is the end of the law unto justice to every believer. Finally he is made to us justice by God the Father. Is not that justice mine which is made to me? If the sin transmitted is mine, why is not the justice granted me mine likewise?"†

It is, indeed, vain to seek in the writings of the Fathers of the Church any support for a system which owes its

* Tract. de erroribus Abailardi, c. vi. † Ibidem.

origin to the bold spirit of Luther. The venerable men, who, in unity of faith, delivered the revealed doctrines, proclaimed, as occasion presented itself, the blessings of redemption communicated to the soul in justification. St. Augustin, so often appealed to by the Reformers on many topics, on which nevertheless he is thoroughly Catholic, observes: "We read that the believer in Christ is justified in him, on account of the secret communication and inspiration of spiritual grace."* "Who made justice in man, unless he who justifieth the impious? namely, who, by his grace, of impious makes him just."† "What is the justice of God and justice of man? It is called the justice of God, not whereby God is just, but which God gives to man, that man may be just through God."‡ "He who believes in him, shall not have his own justice which is of the law, although the law be good; but he will fulfil the law itself, not by his own justice, but by that which is given by God: for charity is the fulfilling of the law. And whence is this charity shed abroad in our hearts? not truly from us, but by the Holy Ghost who is given us."§

I forbear making other quotations which are at hand, especially as Chemnitz has given up the Fathers on this point,‖ and before him Melancthon had stated that he found nothing like imputed justice in their writings.¶ Calvin has acknowledged that not even Augustin could be followed. For our parts, we prefer to the sentiments of these modern teachers, the interpretations of Scripture given by these brilliant lights of the ancient Church, who gratefully acknowledged the riches of divine goodness in

* L. 1 de pec. mer. et remiss.
† In Ps. cxviii. conc. 26.
‡ Tract. xxvi. in Joan.
§ Serm. xv. de verbis Apostoli.
‖ In 1 par. exam. Conc. Trid.
¶ L. iii. ep. 126. col. 574.

the justification of the sinner, and pointed to the cross as the source of those waters of life whereby the soul is enriched. Dr. Pusey has justly described the system of justification by the imputation of the justice of Christ, as "a spurious system, misapplying the promises of the gospel, usurping the privileges of baptism which it has not to confer, giving peace which it has not to bestow, and going counter to the whole tenor of Scripture, that every man shall be judged according to his works."*

* Dr. Pusey's Letter, p. 59.

CHAPTER X.

CERTAINTY OF JUSTIFICATION.

According to Luther, the faith by which we are justified implies a certainty of our justification. Melancthon adopted this maxim ;* which Calvin extended even to our election to glory, maintaining that the elect firmly believe that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to them unto salvation.† The synod of Dort gave its full sanction to this tenet; which may be considered as common to Protestants, although many do not extend it to election. Bull, the learned Anglican bishop, avows its general prevalence among the divines of the reformed churches, and says : "This doctrine has been for many years the veriest shame and disgrace of the Reformed Church."‡ The Presbyterian confession of faith seems to regard it as the perfection of faith, to which many attain:§ and calls it "an infallible assurance of faith, founded upon the divine truth of the promises of salvation, the inward evidence of those graces unto which these promises are made, the testimony of the spirit of adoption witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God." ‖

In the passage of St. Paul to which reference is made in the Presbyterian confession of faith, it is said: "the

* Apol. Conf. Aug. iv. § 40, et xii. § 20. "Hanc certitudinem fidei nos docemus requiri in Evangelio."

† Inst. l. iii. c. ii. § 16.

‡ Harmonia Apostolica Dissert. prior. c. iv. § 6.

§ ch. xiv. 3. ‖ ch. xviii. 2.

Spirit himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God." * No mention is made of the principle of justification; and the testimony of the Spirit may be aptly understood to regard the general dignity of all christians, who by baptism are the children of God. The Apostle meant to mark the difference between the state of the Jews, who were as bond-slaves, under the influence of a law of terror,—and of the members of Christ, who are adopted children, partaking of the Spirit of Christ and addressing God as their Father: "You have not received," he says, "the spirit of bondage in fear: but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba, (Father)." † He reminded the Romans of their Christian dignity, that they might prove themselves the true sons of God by the purity of their lives, shunning the vices of the flesh: "for whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." ‡ The testimony of the Divine Spirit concurs with the interior conviction of faith,§ to assure us of this elevated state peculiar to the Christian dispensation.

If any one choose to explain the text of the interior testimony of the Holy Ghost, given to each justified man of his own justification, his conscience at the same time bearing witness to him, I care not to enter into a critical examination of the correctness of this explanation: but before the certainty of faith is established thereon, it is necessary that each justified man infallibly discern this testimony of the Holy Ghost, from the illusions of self love. If there be no such infallible criterion—if the whisperings of self love may be easily mistaken for the inspirations of

* Rom. viii. 16. † Ibidem 15. ‡ Ibidem 14.
§ συμμαρτυρει.

the Holy Ghost—it is vain to assert the infallible certainty of our justification. Calvin admits that "the reprobate are sometimes affected in a manner almost similar to the elect, so that not even in their own judgment do they differ in any respect from the elect." * Whilst so great similarity of feeling and consciousness exists, it is clear that the presumed certainty is oftentimes, at least, a mere illusion.

There is, however, a testimony of the spirit which gives comfort and confidence, without nourishing pride. "If our hearts," says St. John, "do not reprehend us, we have confidence towards God." † If we feel charity for our brethren, and even for our enemies, in circumstances calculated to rouse every violent feeling, we have a strong indication that we have passed from death to life. "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren." ‡ In many ways does the Holy Ghost console the just, and give them, according to his good pleasure, such assurance of his presence within them as removes excessive solicitude and painful doubt, although in particular instances he withholds these manifestations, for the greater exercise of patience and humility. For the most part the confidence of the just is tempered with fear lest something may be wanting on their part, and with an awe of the divine judgments which are unsearchable to man. We are warned by the Holy Ghost not to indulge excessive security concerning the forgiveness of sin: "Be not without fear about sin forgiven." §

There is no passage of Scripture which assures us that whosoever firmly believes the imputation of the righteousness of Christ simultaneously enjoys it, much less that

* Inst. l. iii. c. ii. § 11. † 1 John iii. 21.
‡ Ibidem 14. § Eccl. v. 5.

assures an individual that he enjoys it. It is written: "He that believeth in the Son of God, hath the testimony of God in himself:"* but the belief there spoken of is in the teaching of God, and is grounded on the testimony of God regarding the divinity of his Son, as is manifest from what follows: "He that believeth not the Son, maketh him a liar: because he believeth not in the testimony which God hath testified of his Son."† The believing that Christ's righteousness is actually imputed to one's self, and that the individual believer stands in the place of Christ, is an effort of imagination, not a Scriptural truth. The certainty is assumed, but does not exist; for no one can know, unless God vouchsafe an extraordinary revelation, that his faith is such as qualifies him for this imputation; and to imagine that the imputation is certain, without reference to the nature and qualities of the faith, is to blaspheme the mystery of Redemption, and set aside the purity and sanctity of the Gospel. This involved Luther in the most manifest contradiction; for whilst he asserted that the believer was as certain of his justification, as he was of the Incarnation of Christ, he denied that he could be certain of his contrition, without which, nevertheless, no pardon can be obtained.‡ He also asserted that no one can be certain that his works are not vitiated by pride and self-love, and are not, therefore, deadly sins. How then can he be certain that he is justified?

The certainty of one's own justification is not only void of foundation in Scripture, but at variance with the undoubted maxims of Christian morality. No one can know with absolute certainty whether his sorrow for sin be super

* 1 John, v. 10. † Ibidem.

‡ See Bossuet, *Histoire des variations*, l. 1. § xv.

natural and universal, sovereign and efficacious. He may feel regret for having committed it, but the sources of feeling and the motives oftentimes are not discernible: yet if he do not detest it as the offence of God for motives proposed by faith, the deepest sorrow will not avail to his justification. The culprit in his dungeon sorrowing over his crime, oftentimes laments only its discovery and punishment, without hating its sinfulness. Sometimes supernatural motives seem to be the sources of sorrow, yet their influence may not be such as to detach the heart from some loved object. Ambition, avarice, hatred, not unfrequently conceal their turpitude from their victim, and whilst many sins are deplored, the favorite vice escapes detection. The merchant detests pride and prodigality, but cannot see any thing criminal in his mode of dealing, which may, nevertheless, be in opposition to the strict laws of justice. Moreover sin should be detested above all other evils, because God should be loved above all: yet who may not doubt whether his sorrow be sovereign? whether he hates sin more than he dreads poverty or disgrace? Sorrow should be efficacious, that is, should effectually withdraw man from sin. How often may we not fear that our feeling is but a transient sense of shame, or pain, soon to be followed by relapse into our sins? It must, then, be rash and presumptuous to assert that we are certainly justified, without considering the many defects that may vitiate our contrition. The same may be said in regard to the motives that may influence us unconsciously in actions apparently virtuous. Although uncertainty must not be extended in this respect so far as Luther maintained, we have always reason to distrust the perfect purity of our motives, and to watch over ourselves, lest we should

grievously offend, while, perhaps, we imagine that we are rendering service to God.

It is revolting to our sense of Christian humility to hear men say, I know, I feel, that my sins are forgiven me. We have no instance in Scripture of similar conversion; we have no text to warrant the absolute assertion of one's own justification. The assurance of pardon always came from without. Nathan gave to David, on his acknowledging his sin, the assurance that the Lord had taken away his sin.* Jesus consoled the paralytic who lay dejected on his bed of suffering, and the penitent woman, who wept at his feet, and the dying thief, none of whom appears to have had the previous conviction of personal justification.

Bishop M'Ilvaine asks: "Now in what way is a poor sinner, working out his salvation, ever to know whether he has peace with God, and may rejoice in hope or not?"† The answer is easy: When he has wept for his sins, and has received the consoling assurance of pardon from the minister of God: when he has forsaken the paths of sin, and its occasions; when he is conscious to himself of no wilful violation of the divine law: and when he studies faithfully to fulfil all the duties of his state, and to repair, as far as in him lies, the consequences of his past transgressions. Then may he humbly hope to be acceptable to God, although his joy must always be tempered with holy fear, and he must cast himself without reserve on the indulgence and mercy of his heavenly Father. St. Thomas having observed that man cannot know with certainty that he is in grace, subjoined that he could have what he terms a conjectural knowledge. "In this way one may

* 2 Kings xii. 13. † Oxford Divinity, p. 88.

know that he is in grace, inasmuch as he perceives that he is delighted in God, and that he despises worldly things, and inasmuch as he is not conscious to himself of any mortal sin. This knowledge, however, is imperfect. Wherefore the Apostle says, 1 Cor. iv. 'I am not conscious to myself of any thing, yet am I not hereby justified:' for, as it is said in Psalm xviii.: 'Who understandeth sins? From my secret ones cleanse me, O Lord.'"* All occasion for excessive anxiety is removed, when sin and its occasions are forsaken, and voluntary prevarication is avoided. It is not, as Bishop M'Ilvaine alleges, by counting his penances, measuring his pilgrimages, or weighing his gifts, that he is to persuade himself of his own righteousness; but if he present the sacrifice of a contrite and humble heart, he may entertain the hope that he may be made worthy to partake of the atonement offered for sin on Calvary. All his hopes centre in the cross, the symbol whereof is constantly presented to his view, to remind him that his Saviour was wounded for our sins, and bruised for our iniquities, and that by his stripes we are healed. If any one ask greater certainty, we must reply with St. Gregory the Great, that the desire is useless: "Since you should not be secure of the remission of your sins, unless at the end of life, when you can no longer weep for them. Until that time come, you should always fear, you should always dread sin, and with daily tears endeavour to wash it away."† Whoever derides the external expressions of the penitent's sorrow, should remember that the publican, striking his breast, and imploring mercy, found acceptance, and that the conduct of the weeping penitent was vindicated and sanctioned by her Lord and Master.

* 1. 2æ qu. CXII. art. V. Resp.

† L. VI. ep. xxii. ad Gregoriam Augustæ cubiculariam.

Justification being uncertain, it is clear that we cannot be certain of our election: yet according to Calvin, we are bound to believe, without any hesitation, that we are individually chosen by God, and foreordained to glory.* We must rest on Christ, and without regard to past or future faults, persuade ourselves firmly that nothing shall separate us from Christ. The certainty which a believer has of his salvation is altogether beyond question, and although he may fall into some transgressions, he can never forfeit his birthright in Christ, and his eternal inheritance. The sins into which passion may betray him, may deprive him for a time of the light of the countenance of his heavenly Father; but they cannot separate him from Him, since from all eternity God loves his elect in Christ. This idea of justifying faith was adopted by the famous Council of Dort, as the genuine Calvinistic sentiment, and is retained in the Presbyterian Confession to this day.† There is, nevertheless, no passage of Scripture that warrants any individual in believing that he has been chosen by God, by a free and unchangeable counsel of the divine will, to everlasting glory. Even were the lot of the saints thus determined, independently of any act of their will co-operating with grace, the individuals chosen cannot know the secret counsel of God, unless by a special revelation. "Who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor?"‡ In the effort of mind, whereby an individual persuades himself that he is one of the elect of God, he proceeds on a gratuitous assumption, utterly destitute of any Scriptural foundation. He may conceive himself authorised by certain texts to believe that God destined the elect to glory, and that Christ died for

* Vide Calvin Instit. l. iii. c. ii. § 16. † Ch. xi. 5. ‡ Rom. xi. 34.

them, and he may hope that he is one of them; but unless God himself, in a clear and certain manner, declare it, he cannot hold with firmness his own election. They who hold that God wishes all men to be saved, and that Christ died for all, can say without the least doubt in the language of the Apostle: "I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered himself for me."* But if any limit be put to the divine will of human salvation, if the blood shed on Calvary be restricted in its application to a privileged number, no man can say without presumption, God wishes *me* to be saved: Christ died for *me*. To cherish this absolute conviction of our election to glory, whilst we yield to moral disorders, is to add to the corruption of the heart an outrage on the Divine Majesty. Presumption is too mild a term for this daring flight of human fancy. It is madness, impiety, blasphemy. How different were the sentiments and feelings of the Apostle: "O! the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! how incomprehensible are his judgments, and how unsearchable his ways!"† He did not fail to remind the faithful of the humility and fear in which they should walk before God: "Thou standest by faith: be not high-minded, but fear."‡ "He that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall."§ "With fear and trembling work out your salvation."‖

It must be evident to every reflecting mind, that the absolute persuasion of one's own election to glory, is in the highest degree dangerous to the purity of Christian morals, as it is utterly subversive of Christian humility. It is admitted that such conviction cannot be cherished by those

* Gal. ii. 20. † Rom. xi. 33. ‡ Ibidem v. 20.
§ 1 Cor. x. 12. ‖ Philip. ii. 12.

who voluntarily and grievously transgress: yet when it is declared that no man can observe the commandments of God, and that every man sins daily in thought word and deed, and that every sin is deadly, and that even the elect may fall into grievous sins, "although they can never fall from the state of justification," we easily perceive how men may flatter themselves in sin, since they thereby only "fall under God's fatherly displeasure." * Besides it is difficult to cherish humility where there is an absolute assurance of one's own salvation. On the contrary, pride will frequently manifest itself in the contempt of such as do not appear to the elect objects of the same divine choice.

St. Augustin has accurately expressed the certainty which the saints have of the reward of perseverance, and the doubt wherein they are left, whether they shall persevere: "Although the saints are certain of the reward of their perseverance, they are nevertheless uncertain concerning their perseverance. For what man knows whether he shall persevere to the end in the performance and increase of justice, unless he be made certain by some revelation from Him, who, by a just and secret judgment, does not impart the knowledge of this to all, but deceives no one?" †

Most of the texts brought forward to maintain the knowledge which each believer has of his election to eternal glory, are to be understood of the election of the members of the Church to the faith. In the commencement of his first letter to the Thessalonians, the Apostle thus speaks of the knowledge which he had of the extraordinary circumstances attending their call to the faith: "Knowing, brethren beloved of God, your election: for our Gospel

* Presbyterian Confession, ch. xi. 5.

† L. xi. de civ. Dei c. xii.

hath not been unto you in word only, but in power also, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much fulness." * Bloomfield observes on this text: "I entirely agree with Dr. A. Clarke that the election here spoken of is that treated of by the Apostle at large in the Epistles to the Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians; and that it is no irrespective, unconditional, eternal, and personal election to everlasting glory, that is meant by the Apostle; but temporal election, the being called and chosen, as a body out of the world by the Word and Spirit." †

The Apostle says: "I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor Angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." ‡ This is the strong expression of his confidence. The Greek term implies no more: πέπεισμαι, and the Protestant version expresses no more: "I am persuaded." The Apostle might well entertain the strongest conviction, short of the certainty of divine faith, that he would persevere. The graces received were so many pledges of special mercy: and the communications made to him in his heavenly raptures might even warrant absolute certainty. Of others he could entertain merely hope. He knew indeed that nothing could separate them from God, as long as their will remained subject to him; and he could therefore say in regard to the servants of God that neither the malice of the infernal spirits, nor the cruelty of men, could separate them from God: but he knew also the frailty and inconstancy of the human will, and used no expression

* 1 Thess. i. 4. † In locum. ‡ Rom. viii. 38.

that can justify any individual in calculating with certainty on his own perseverance.

We are, then, warranted in rejecting the certainty of personal justification and election, because it is destitute of foundation in Scripture, tends to foster pride, and is dangerous to morals. It has pleased God to leave us in uncertainty, that we may walk in humble dependence on his goodness, neither depressed by excessive fear, nor elated by absolute confidence. "There are just men and wise men, and their works are in the hands of God; and yet man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or hatred, but all things are kept uncertain for the time to come."* The most holy men, conscious to themselves of no wilful transgression, must with trembling awe await the manifestation of God's judgment, and in the mean time chastise the body, and bring it into subjection lest they become reprobate. Vigilance and prayer must be their great safeguards; they are daily to sue for pardon of the offences into which they daily fall, and of their past transgressions, the pardon whereof is only secured by perseverance in sentiments of deep contrition.

* Eccl. ix. 1.

CHAPTER XI.

BAPTISM.—INSTRUMENTAL CAUSE OF JUSTIFICATION.

The Council of Trent, carefully distinguishing between the dispositions, or preparation of mind, required in the adult for justification, and the means whereby this gift is imparted, says: "The instrumental cause of justification is the Sacrament of Baptism, which is the Sacrament of faith, without which (faith) no one was ever justified."* God is acknowledged to be the author of our justification: Jesus Christ merited it for us by his death on the cross: faith is indispensable for its reception in the adult, enjoying the use of reason, for no one at any time or under any dispensation was ever justified without it, since "without faith it is impossible to please God."† Baptism is the instrument or means whereby God applies to the believer the benefit of the atonement of Jesus Christ.

The Sacrament of Baptism is called the Sacrament of faith, because it is administered to the adult applicant, on his profession of faith in the revelation of God: nor is it possible to impart to him its benefits, whilst he refuses to captivate his understanding unto the obedience of Christ. Never has any one been justified without faith. Abel, Noe, Abraham, David, attained to justice by the belief of the revelation of God proposed to them. They contemplated the future redemption, and longed to witness it, and exulted in its contemplation. In principle they embraced all that we adore as fulfilled by our divine Redeemer, and

* Sess. vi. cap. vii. † Heb. xi. 6.

they partook of his justice and were sanctified by his merits. The rites which they were commanded to observe, were in themselves needy and helpless elements;—circumcision to mark each male descendant of Abraham as an heir of the covenant: aspersions, ablutions, oblations, sacrifices, and other types of a future and better dispensation. But faith in the truth of God and in his promises; hope, and obedience, with love, made the ancients partakers by anticipation of the new covenant. Our Sacraments, the institutions of Jesus Christ, impart what they signify, and are channels through which grace flows to purify and enrich our hearts.

Following up the principle of justification by faith only, Bishop McIlvaine, in common with most Protestants, rejects the instrumental efficacy of Baptism, and maintains that the Sacrament necessarily supposes the previous justification of the adult receiver, by faith. "As true repentance and faith," he writes, "are required for adult Baptism, and where there is true repentance towards God, there must be true love, it follows that the church considers that whosoever is truly prepared for adult Baptism is already born of God, and already justified."* This of course, reduces Baptism to a mere external rite, or "an outward exhibition of what had already taken place inwardly,"† the justice already imputed by faith, and conferring membership in the Church visible. In regard to infants, it becomes in this theory "an outward admission to privileges which may afterwards become inward."‡ Dr. Pusey, on the contrary, fully admits Baptism to be a divinely ordained instrument of grace whereby we are born

* Oxford Divinity, p. 375. † Tract 67 on Baptism, p. 70.
‡ Ibidem, p. 40, note.

anew to God. "Baptism is not a mere initiatory or significant rite, but is an appointed means for conveying the Holy Spirit."* "This is our new birth, an actual birth of God, of water, and the Spirit, as we were actually born of our natural parents; herein then also are we justified, or both accounted and made righteous, since we are made members of Him who is alone righteous; freed from past sin, whether original or actual; have a new principle of life imparted to us, since having been made members of Christ, we have a portion of his life, or of Him who is our life; herein we have also the hope of the resurrection and of immortality, because we have been made partakers of his resurrection, have risen again with Him."† "Baptism," he says elsewhere, "is the instrument whereby God communicated to us the remission of sins, justification, holiness, life, communion with the Son and the Father through the Spirit."‡ He avows that such has ever been the belief of the whole Church: "Every vestige of Christianity," he says, "which God has preserved to us from the ancient Church, that explains the words, 'Except a man be born of water and the Spirit,' assumes that they declare that in Baptism we are born from above, through our Saviour's gift: every passage which speaks of the privileges of Baptism at all, implies the same; their whole system of theology presupposes it: every branch of the whole Church, independent as they may have been in their origin, ingraft upon their Baptismal Liturgies, (and in this sense) our Lord's words, 'Except a man be born of water and the spirit.'"§

The pardon of sins and grace of the Holy Ghost are expressly promised to those who receive baptism with

* Tract 67 on Baptism, p. 112. † Ibidem, p. 24.
‡ Ibidem, p. 140. § Ibidem, p. 38.

faith and compunction of heart,* and these blessings are spoken of as the effects of the sacrament. When, on hearing Peter's discourse, the Jews "had compunction in their heart, and said to Peter and to the rest of the Apostles: What shall we do men brethren? Peter said to them, Do penance, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins: and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."† The address of Ananias to Saul gives us the same idea of an ablution by which sins are washed away: "Now why tarriest thou; Rise up and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, invoking his name."‡ St. Paul, himself, constantly speaks to the same effect: "Christ," he says, "loved the Church, and delivered himself up for it, that he might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life."§ "Not by the works of justice which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us by the laver of regeneration, and renovation of the Holy Ghost."‖ All these texts present baptism as the instrument and means whereby justification, and regeneration, and renovation is perfected. The same is deduced from the words of our Lord: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost he cannot enter into the kingdom of

* Bishop M'Ilvaine says, p. 216, note, that compunction, not contrition, is required by us. We use both terms to signify true sorrow of heart for having offended God.

† Acts, ii. 37.

‡ Ib. xxii. 16., ἐπικαλεσαμενος το ὄνομα του Κυρίου: literally: "having invoked the name of the Lord." The washing away of sins is by the force of the term and the grammatical construction of the sentence referred to baptism.

§ Eph. v. 25. ‖ Tit. iii. 5.

God."* This supposes the divine institution of this sacrament, and a divinely imparted virtue. The external ablution, of itself, could not affect the soul, but would only serve to put away the defilements of the flesh. Its virtue and efficacy arises from its being the appointed means of grace, and from the merits of the Redeemer, which it applies to the soul, and from the power of the holy Trinity, which is invoked. It cannot purify the unbeliever, whose pride raises itself up against the knowledge of God: it cannot sanctify the obstinate sinner, whose heart rebels against grace: but, for the believer, it is the means of salvation: "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved:"† for the penitent it serves for the remission of sins: "Do penance, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins."‡ The infant, or the adult, who has never enjoyed the use of reason, as he is incapable of believing, or conceiving any other disposition, so can he oppose no obstacle to the purifying and sanctifying virtue of the sacrament, and accordingly he is washed clean from the hereditary defilement, and by the regenerating power he is made a child of God, with the right to enter into the everlasting kingdom. Thus the ancient fathers of the Church spoke of baptism as the instrument of regeneration and sanctification, St. Justin§ and St. Irenæus‖ expressly say that we are regenerated by it: and Tertullian exclaims: "Blessed sacrament of water, wherein being washed from the sins of our former blindness, we are liberated unto life everlasting! . . . . Is it not wonderful that death should be destroyed by the laver? Nay it is the more credible for its wonderful nature, which

* John iii. 5. † Mark xvi. 16. ‡ Acts ii. 38.

§ Apol. 1, n. 61. ‖ L. iii. adv. haer. c. xix.

is the occasion of unbelief. What should we expect the works of God to be, unless surpassing all admiration?"* St. Cyprian writes: "Because God has said: 'Be ye holy, since I am holy: we ask and implore that we who have been sanctified in baptism may persevere in what we have begun to be."† "To name individuals, in this universal consent," says Dr. Pusey, writing on this subject, "is to disguise the extent of the evidence; it is to point to a few single luminaries in the nightly sky, when the whole heavens are lighted and thickly set with the stars which He has ordained."‡

Dr. Pusey asks: "Does the Sacrament of Baptism acquire no awfulness of value from being commanded by our ascending Lord, just as He was establishing His everlasting kingdom upon earth, and about to assume His heavenly kingdom above all things? 'So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God!' Rather every thing here invests it with solemnity; His foundation of His Church thereon; His bestowing it as His parting gift; His annexing to it our salvation; His binding up with it, and imparting to us by it, and reserving for this moment at which to impart it, the full and distinct revelation of the doctrine of the Ever Blessed Trinity; His commanding this act alone in the whole Christian life to be done in Their Name; His promise that Their Name shall herein be efficacious. In St. Chrysostom's words, 'the holy angels stand by, doing nothing, they only look on what is done; but the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, effect all. Let us then obey the declaration of God, for this is more credible than sight;

* Lib. de Baptismo. † Lib. de Orat. Dominica.

‡ Tract on Baptism, p. 30, American edit.

for sight is, yea and oftentimes, deceived; but that can never fail. Obey we then it.'"* In reference to the worthiness of the baptizer, he says: "In one sense, indeed, the Apostles, or their successors, baptize, because He gave them the commission 'to baptize all nations;' but then also He who promised, 'Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world,' accompanies their act, and is in reality and truth, the only Baptizer. It is His Baptism, not theirs; they baptize as the servants, He, as the Lord; they with water, He 'with the Holy Ghost, and with fire;' they touch the body, He applies it to the soul; they visibly, He invisibly; they in obedience to Him, He accepts the obedience of His Church, and 'cleanseth' each new member, which she presents unto Him, 'with the washing of water by the word.' It is He who cleanseth."†

The primary effect of baptism is to cancel original sin, the water washing away this hereditary stain, and the Holy Ghost giving us a new birth in Christ. "If any one," says the Council of Trent, "deny that by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is conferred in Baptism, the guilt of original sin is remitted, or even assert that all what has the real and proper nature of sin is not taken away: but say that it is only cut away, or not imputed, let him be anathema. For God hates nothing in those who are born anew; since there is no condemnation to such as are truly buried with Christ by Baptism unto death, who walk not according to the flesh, but putting off the old man, and putting on the new, who was created according to God, have been made innocent, spotless, pure, guiltless, and beloved of God, heirs indeed of God, and co-heirs of Christ, so that nothing whatsoever withholds them from entering

* Tract 67, on Baptism, p. 71. † Ib. p. 155.

into heaven. But this holy Synod confesses and knows that concupiscence, or lust, remains in baptized persons, which being left for exercise, cannot hurt those who do not consent, but manfully resist through the grace of Christ Jesus: on the contrary whosoever shall strive lawfully for the mastery shall be crowned. This concupiscence, which the Apostle sometimes styles sin, the holy Synod declares, has never been understood by the Catholic Church to be called sin, as if it were truly and strictly sin in those who are born anew, but because it proceeds from sin, and inclines us to sin. And if any one hold the contrary sentiment, let him be anathema."* The Council of Trent directed these anathemas against the Reformers, who placed original sin in concupiscence, and as it is not taken away by baptism, maintained that it only ceases to be imputed to believers.

The Church of England, defining original sin as "the fault and corruption of the nature of every man that is naturally engendered," states that "this infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated, whereby the lust of the flesh is not subject to the law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized, yet the Apostle doth confess that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin."† Thus the efficacy of baptism to cancel original sin is plainly denied, and the baptized person is acknowledged to continue in the state of deadly sin, although this be not imputed. "This concupiscence, therefore," observes Bishop M'Ilvaine, "in the judgment of our Church, is a mortal sin, as all sins truly are."‡ Mr. Newman evidently recedes from

* Conc. Trid. Sess. v. Decr. de pecc. orig.

† Art. ix. ‡ Oxford Divinity, p. 258.

this opinion, and appears to embrace the sentiment of those Catholic Divines, who hold that original sin is nothing more than the privation of original justice, the stripping of human nature of the supernatural gifts wherewith it was originally endowed by the free gift of God. "Whereas," he remarks, "we have gained under the Gospel what we lost in Adam, and justification is a reversing of our forfeiture, and a robe of righteousness is what Christ gives, perchance a robe is what Adam lost. If so, what is told us of what he lost, will explain what it is we gain. Now the peculiar gift which Adam lost certainly seems to have been a supernatural clothing—Christ clothes us in God's sight with something over and above nature, which Adam forfeited."* He also labours to reconcile the Article of the Church of England regarding justification by faith only, with the power of Baptism, as the external instrument of justification; "an inward instrument in no way interfering with an outward instrument, Baptism may be the hand of the giver, and faith the hand of the receiver."† "Our actual descent from Adam," writes Dr. Pusey, "is cut off by this our new lineage in Christ; our birth in Adam is corrected and replaced by our birth of God in Christ; as we are really sons of man by physical birth, so are we as really and as actually 'sons of God' by spiritual birth; sons of man, by being born of Adam, sons of God by being members of Him who is the son of God."‡

The texts of Scripture which speak of Baptism as renovating man, washing him, sanctifying him, and which declare him free from any cause, or any matter of condemnation, when thus incorporated with Christ, clearly prove

* Lectures on Justif. p. 176—182. † Tract No. 90, § 2.
‡ Tract No. 67, p. 97.

that whatever has the real nature of sin is taken away by the sacred laver. It is revolting to think that even the baptized man should be necessarily and constantly in mortal sin. This is not to exhibit divine mercy, but to blaspheme the work of God, as in itself vicious and corrupt,* and to deny the efficacy of a sacrament directed expressly to the remission of sin.

The necessity of Baptism for salvation was declared by the Council of Trent, which anathematized "whosoever shall say that Baptism is free, that is not necessary for salvation."† In the exposition of Catholic doctrine, the Council says: "Since the gospel has been promulgated, the translation" (from the state in which we are born to the state of grace,) "cannot take place without the laver of generation or its desire: as it is written, Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."‡ It is surprising to find that Bishop M'Ilvaine admits in a note that we "deny not salvation to such as have desired Baptism";§ and attempts to prove it inconsistent with our principles, which he misstates, whilst in the text he alledges that the Council of Trent declared that no one was ever justified without the actual reception of baptism: "It is," he says, "notoriously the doctrine of the Trent Decrees that Baptism is 'the only instrumental cause' of justification; so absolutely necessary thereto, that without it justification is obtained by none."‖ This is rendered the more remarkable by

* Möhler rightly observes that this opinion supposes sin to be a substance; and thus revives one of the worst errors of the Gnostics and Manicheans. Symbolik l. 1. ch. ii. § vi.

† Sess. vii. Can. v. de Baptismo.

‡ Sess. vi. cap. iv. de justif.

§ Oxford Divinity, p. 213. Note.

‖ Ibidem. Text.

his quoting in the note these words as of the Council: "Instrumentalis causa—Sacramentum baptismi sine QUO nulli unquam justificatio contingit. Concil. Trident. Sess. vi." Were the decrees of the Council before him when he made this quotation, it would be impossible to excuse him from the disgrace of having mutilated and corrupted the text, to suit his purpose: but of this I willingly acquit him, being persuaded that he took the quotation at second hand. The text runs thus: "Instrumentalis item, sacramentum baptismi, QUOD EST SACRAMENTUM FIDEI SINE QUA nulli unquam contigit justificatio."* "The sacrament of Baptism, which is the sacrament of faith, without which (faith) no one ever was justified, is the instrumental cause." The necessity of faith in adults is declared, in conformity with the teaching of the Apostle, that "without faith it is impossible to please God." No mention whatsoever of the necessity of Baptism is made in this passage; and yet Bishop M'Ilvaine makes it the foundation of an argument to which he frequently reverts !†

The inconsistency with which he reproaches us as, on the one hand, admitting the possibility of salvation of those who die without Baptism, but sincerely desiring it, and, on the other, asserting "the deadness of faith, and the necessary absence of love in all faith which precedes Baptism,"‡ is a pure misconception on his part. We say in the language of St. James, that the faith of him whose works do not correspond with his belief is dead, but we do not say that such is necessarily the case with every one who is a candidate for Baptism, since the grace of God

* Sess. vi. cap. vii. Decr. de justif.

† Vide Oxford Divinity, p. 371, 375, et passim.

‡ Ibidem p. 214. et p. 182.

may inspire him with lively faith and ardent love before its actual reception. Cornelius and his family received the Holy Ghost whilst Peter was yet speaking to them, before they were baptized.* Others may receive grace in like manner, and be justified before the actual reception of the sacrament, the grace whereof they may receive by anticipation, God accepting the desire of their heart, and subsequently in its reception conferring more abundant grace.† This may particularly happen in regard to such as are snatched out of life before they can receive the sacrament. The believer, whilst preparing for its reception, may suddenly feel the approach of death, when no minister of God or other person is at hand to make the sacred ablution. Relatives, under the influence of strong prejudices, may refuse to the dying man the opportunity of receiving the sanctifying rite. In such circumstances his faith, desire, and love will no doubt obtain for him from the divine goodness the grace which he earnestly implores. This sentiment is not at all inconsistent with the belief of the necessity of Baptism for all who have it in their power to receive it, and of its efficacy, whereby grace is imparted to the worthy receiver.

The faith of the Catechumen who diligently prepares for the reception of Baptism, has not its full perfection until love be joined with it; "for," as the Council of Trent teaches, "unless hope and charity be united with it, it neither perfectly unites with Christ, nor renders us a

* Acts x. 44.

† Dr. Pusey's views in regard to the baptism of Cornelius, are somewhat peculiar, but do not deserve the severe strictures of Bishop M'Ilvaine. He holds that Cornelius was already sanctified, before he sent for Peter, but that he was not regenerated until he actually received Baptism. See Tract on Baptism, p. 176.

living member of his body."* Yet it must not be confounded with the faith of the obstinate sinner, whose sterile convictions are likened by St. James to the sense which demons have of the divine power and justice.—The Catechumen fears the judgments of God, hopes in his mercy, flees to his goodness, and purposes to serve and love him, sorrowing over his own folly and sinfulness, whereby he provoked so good a Father. Who dares assimilate the tears of Peter, or Magdalen, to the wrathful feeling of damned souls, agitated by despair, hate, and every passion? It may be that the faith and sorrow of the Catechumen are not so perfect as to reconcile him with God until the actual reception of Baptism, when divine grace supplies the deficiency, exalts and perfects the dispositions which proceeded originally from a divine impulse, and fills the soul with the love of God: but the virtues of hope and love are not necessarily withheld, to be then imparted. The faith which precedes is not necessarily a dead faith. It is, on the contrary, the first principle of life, moving and preparing the soul for its enjoyment, exciting to hope and love, and finally working through love. It may at once, through the grace of God, quicken into life, and being accompanied with all the virtues, of which it is the parent, justify and sanctify the soul before the actual reception of Baptism: but if the work of grace gradually develop itself, it is wrong to brand its commencement as naked and dead faith, because it does not yet appear in its full vigor. It is a germ of life, gradually developed and matured, and bearing fruit in due season.

Bishop M'Ilvaine, misled again by his guides, makes

* Sess. vi. cap. vi. de justif.

the following statement: "Aquinas, defining the faith required for Baptism, says that though a person should not have a right faith as to other articles, he may have it as to Baptism, and thus he may have the intention to receive Baptism. But even though he should not think correctly concerning this sacrament, a general intention is sufficient for its reception: because, though he knows nothing correctly about it, he intends to receive it as Christ appointed, and the Church has handed it down." He then quotes the words of St. Thomas, but mistakes the reference,* whence it is plain that he has been led into his erroneous inference by the author from whom he borrowed the quotation: "Thus," he says, "the most general assent, a mere profession of faith, in whatever may be asserted by the church, without knowing any thing about it, is the whole requirement for Baptism."† Although the mistake is manifest, and excusable, I know not what excuse can be offered for making so grave a charge against so distinguished a divine, and against the Church, whose doctrine he explains so lucidly. The words quoted are indeed found in St. Thomas, but he expressly limits their meaning to the mere valid reception of the sacrament. He remarks, that "two effects are produced in the soul by Baptism, namely, sacramental character and grace. Any thing may be necessary for Baptism in two ways. In one sense that is necessary, without which grace, which is the last effect of the sacrament, cannot be had: and in this way correct faith is required of necessity for Baptism: because as is said in Romans iii. 'The justice of God is through the

* He cites p. 1, 2, q. 67, q. 8. The passage is taken from the 3rd part of the Summa, not from the 1st. the 68th question and 8th Article. The reference should consequently be p. 3, qu. 68, art. 8, ad 3.

† Oxford divinity, p. 216. Note.

faith of Jesus Christ.' In another way that is necessarily required for Baptism, without which the baptismal character cannot be impressed. And in this sense the correct faith of the baptized person is not required of necessity for Baptism, as not even the correct faith of him who baptizes, provided the other things be had which are of necessity for the Sacrament. For the Sacrament is not perfected through the justice of the giver or receiver, but through the power of God."* So far, then, from teaching that the whole requirement for Baptism is a most general assent, without any distinct knowledge of the articles of belief, St. Thomas expressly requires sound faith for the reception of the grace of the Sacrament, and holds it to be unlawful to administer it to any one who does not abandon infidelity and sin: "As the Sacrament of Baptism should not be conferred on him who will not forsake other sins, so neither should it be administered to him who will not abandon infidelity. Both however receive the Sacrament, if it be administered to them, although not to their salvation."†

The doctrine of St. Thomas is this: some kind of intention is required on the part of the adult for the valid reception of Baptism: such intention may exist in one whose faith is not sound, even as to the Sacrament itself. Such an individual, therefore, if baptized, really receives the sacramental character, although his soul be devoid of grace, since without true faith, as well as sincere repentance, justice cannot be attained. To infer hence that a mere profession of faith in whatever may be asserted by the Church, is the whole requirement for baptism, is bad logic, and great injustice.

With similar injustice Bishop M'Ilvaine adds: "Aquinas

* St. Thomas ubi supra Resp. † Ibidem ad 4.

teaches no more concerning the repentance required. He says: 'Pœnitentia ante baptismum est actus virtutis disponens ad sacramentum baptismi;' it is an act of virtue disposing one to Baptism. This is precisely what he and Mr. Newman say of the *dead faith* before Baptism. Of course, if faith is dead, repentance must be also. Hence Romanists call it mere *attrition*, that is, a sort of penitence, resulting only from fear, having no love of God, which is the distinguishing feature of *contrition*. Thus Aquinas: Antequam gratia infundatur non est habitus a quo actus contritionis postea elicitur; est sic nullo modo attritio potest fieri contritio.' Before grace is poured into the heart (in Baptism) there is no habit from which the act of contrition may be elicited; and thus in no way can *attrition* become contrition. Part 3, Suppl. 2, 2, A. 3.*

The faith and repentance required for baptism must necessarily exclude the disposition to sin: "The Sacrament of Baptism," says St. Thomas, "cannot impart salvation, if the will of sinning be cherished, which excludes the form of faith."† The penitence, then, cannot be styled dead, since it disposes for life, and though it may be attrition, resulting from the fear of divine justice, it must exclude the disposition to sin, and be accompanied with hope, in order to prepare the soul for justification in the Sacrament. It does not spring from the most perfect motives of love, but it implies a commencement of love whereby God is embraced as the source of all justice.‡ In the passage quoted by Bishop M'Ilvaine, St. Thomas treats of a scholastic subtlety, whether attrition can become con-

* Oxford Divinity, p. 217. Note.

† 3 par. qu. lxviii. art. iv. ad 3.

‡ Conc. Trid. Sess. vi. cap. vi. de justific.

trition, and he maintains the negative opinion, because contrition is grounded on higher motives, and springs from sanctifying grace. Before grace is communicated, (whether in Baptism or otherwise, he does not state,) the habit or state of the soul, from which contrition arises, does not exist; and therefore contrition must be ascribed to a new and different principle. The servile fear by which the sinner was roused at the intimation of God's judgments, gives place to a holier feeling of love, and he no longer hates sin merely as the cause of never-ending torments, but as the offence of God most worthy of all his love.

Thus, then, the dispositions for Baptism are an unreserved faith in all the revealed truths, and a sincere sorrow for having offended God. The candidate may conceive this sorrow from the most perfect motives: but provided it be supernatural and efficacious, he may approach the Sacrament with confidence in the mercy of our Saviour God, who will complete the good work he has begun, and breathe his holy love into the soul, and glorify his power in this new creation. What is there wanting in this doctrine to excite man to purity of life, and to vindicate the attributes of God?

The efficacy of Baptism, as the instrument of Divine power, is attested by all the christian fathers in numberless passages of their writings. They dwell on the prerogatives of the Christian, made a child of God at the sacred font: they explain, with admirable variety and depth of thought, the figures of the ancient dispensation from the time when the Spirit brooded over the waters, until the same Spirit descended dove-like over the Saviour, as he came forth from the Jordan: they expound the prophetic oracles which announce a purification from all iniquities with clean water, and the creation of a new heart and new spirit: they

represent the Christian as incorporated with Christ by means of the sacred laver: they unfold the sublime duties that the reception of Baptismal grace and character imposes; and in every imaginable way they bear testimony to the Divine effects of this sacrament.* Yet Bishop M'Ilvaine, after Jewel, has ventured to quote a passage of St. Augustin, as adverse to its efficacy. The passage only shows, that the efficacy of the ablution is derived from the invocation which accompanies it, and that this is not a mere sound, but an object of divine faith. On the text: "Now you are clean by reason of the word, which I have spoken to you," St. Augustin asks: "Why does he not say, you are clean by reason of the Baptism wherewith you are washed, but by reason of the word which I have spoken to you; unless it is because the word cleanses even in the water? Take away the word, and what is water but water? The word is added to the element, and the Sacrament is conferred. Whence has the water so great virtue that whilst it touches the body, it cleanses the soul, unless through the efficacy of the word, not because it is uttered, but because it is believed? For in the word itself the passing sound differs from the abiding virtue. This is the word of faith which we preach, by which, doubtless, even Baptism is consecrated, that it may have the power of cleansing. For Christ, who is the vine together with us, and whose Father is the husbandman, loved the Church, and delivered himself for it. Read the Apostle, and see what he adds: 'that he might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word.' Cleansing would by no means be ascribed to a liquid and transient element, unless it were added in the word. This word of

* See the Tract of Dr. Pusey, No. 67, throughout.

faith is so powerful in the Church of God, that by means of it, it cleanses the believer, him who offers, him who blesses, him who baptizes, even the tender infant, although not yet able with the heart to believe unto justice, and with the mouth to confess unto salvation."* It is most evident that Augustin ascribes to the Sacrament an intrinsic power, whereby the soul is cleansed, the infant without actual faith is made a child of God, and the adult believer is purified from the stains of actual sins, as well as from original sin. He justly ascribes this virtue, not to the mere water, but to the divine word, whereby the water is consecrated, and made the instrument of Christ for the purification of the soul.

* Tract. 80 in Joan.

CHAPTER XII.

SACRAMENTS IN GENERAL.

The doctrine of justifying faith, as propounded by Luther, naturally led to the disparagement of all the Sacraments. "All the Sacraments," he said, "were instituted to nourish faith."* Elsewhere he writes: "It cannot be true that the Sacraments have an efficacious force of justification, or that they are efficacious signs of grace. For all these things are said to the prejudice of faith, through ignorance of the divine promise. Unless you style them efficacious in this sense, provided there be undoubting faith, they impart grace most certainly and most efficaciously."† Melancthon said they were μνημόσυνα—"mere memorials for the exercise of faith."‡ Calvin admitted the efficacy of the Sacraments only in regard to the elect, to whom God gives grace, not through them as instruments, but according to his eternal decree. He scornfully repelled all idea of intrinsic efficacy.§ These sentiments prevail generally throughout the various Protestant sects.

Those who are denominated the High Church party among Episcopalians have usually employed language implying more dignity and efficacy in the Sacraments than their brethren of the Low Church are willing to acknowledge: and the Oxford divines seem ready to subscribe, if

* Opp. Jen. tom. iii. fol. 286, b.
† Ibidem 287.
‡ Loc. theol. p. 46.
§ Instit. l. iv. § 17, fol. 477.

not in terms, at least in substance, to the Catholic doctrine on the subject. Dr. Pusey complains of those who entertain low views of the Sacraments, "as if there were some antecedent improbability in God's gifts being lodged in particular observances, and distributed in a particular way; and as if the strong wish, or moral worth, of the individual could create in the outward ceremony a virtue which it had not received from above. Rationalistic, or (as they may more properly be called) carnal notions concerning the Sacraments, and on the other hand, a superstitious apprehension of resting in them, and a slowness to believe the possibility of God's having literally blessed ordinances with invisible power, have, alas! infected a large mass of men in our communion. . . . "Hence we have almost embraced the doctrine, that God conveys grace only through the instrumentality of the mental energies, that is, through faith, prayer, active spiritual contemplations, or (what is called) communion with God in contradiction to the primitive views, according to which the church and her Sacraments are the ordained and direct visible means of conveying to the soul what is in itself supernatural and unseen."*

The intrinsic efficacy of the Sacraments is expressed by the church, when she says that they contain and confer grace *ex opere operato*. This is styled by Bishop M'Ilvaine "a dark and deadly plague spot of Popery;"† and yet it means no more than that, as Divine institutions, they are the instruments by which Christ imparts his gifts to men, whensoever no obstacle exists on the part of those who

* Advertisement, premised to Tract on Baptism, No. 67. In the English edition it precedes Tract No. 47.

† Oxford Divinity, p. 217.

receive them. When the Priest says: 'I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;' and simultaneously washes the applicant with water, the power of the Triune God purifies the soul. It is not the piety of the Priest that ensures the effect: the solemn invocation does not derive its power from his earnestness:* the faith and humility and compunction of the receiver are not the sources of the grace by which he is sanctified. It is the Sacrament itself, as a Divine instrument, which accomplishes what it signifies, and gives to the soul purity and grace. Obstacles, however, must be removed, that grace may exercise its power. If it fall on a heart of stone, its waters will glide away, without penetrating it. If the heavenly light be intercepted by the clouds of human passion, its rays may not pierce the obscurity in which the sinner is involved. But when the eyes of the unbeliever are partially opened to the truths of faith, and full faith is gradually conceived, with the other necessary dispositions, the waters of Baptism wash away his sins.

It is a gross error to imagine that to ascribe any inherent virtue to the Sacraments is to detract from the great sacrifice of atonement. The offering of Calvary is constantly held in view, and from the victim bleeding on the cross for our sins, the virtue of all his institutions is derived. If the ablution with water cleanse the soul, it is in virtue of that blood which cleanseth from all iniquity. The power of God is displayed in the efficacy of these Divine instruments: and man is aroused from deadly lethargy, and

* "The unworthiness of men cannot prevent the goodness of God from flowing in those channels in which he has destined it to flow." Tract No. 5.

stimulated to active co-operation with grace, when he is taught that he must bring to their reception an humble mind and a subdued heart.

When Bishop M'Ilvaine asserts that by the Sacraments conferring grace *ex opere operato* is meant that no previous preparation of internal piety, such as that of a living faith is required in the recipient," he entirely misstates our principles; since faith, and hope, and sorrow, and good resolution, are most certainly required in the adult.

He says: "In the scholastic language of Romanism, there are two technical expressions with regard to the efficacy of the Sacraments: viz. *opus operans* and *opus operatum*. The expression that the Sacraments confer grace *ex opere operante* means that their efficacy requires in the recipient, a preparatory state of inward piety. But the efficacy of the Sacraments of the Christian Church is—that they confer grace *ex opere operato*, by which is meant that no previous preparation of internal piety, such as that of a living faith, is required in the recipient."* The Bishop has not only misstated the sense of this distinction, but has even misstated the terms in which it is proposed. The scholastics never speak of *opus operans*, but of *opus operantis*. I submit the simple explanation of Father Thomas a Charmes: "sacramentum conferre gratiam *ex opere operato*, est illam causare præcise vi operis ex instituto divino exerciti; non autem ex merito conficientis vel suscipientis sacramentum: hinc opus operatum est ipsum sacramentum debite subjecto applicatum. Sacramentum conferre gratiam *ex opere operantis*, est illam causare præcise vi meriti conficientis vel suscipientis sacramentum.† The difference, then, lies in this, that the Sacraments of Christ

* Oxford Divinity, p. 215 † Tract. de Sacr. c. vi. §. ii.

by his institution have a divine virtue in themselves ; to receive which, however, the adult must be prepared by faith, and other dispositions: whilst other acts, as formerly the Mosaic rites, produce no effect, unless such as the piety of the person, who performs or receives them, may obtain from divine bounty.

With similar injustice it is stated by Bishop M'Ilvaine after many other writers, that the Catholic church "teaches that the mere fear of punishment, called *attrition*, when united with the Sacrament of Penance is a substitute for true *contrition* of heart."* This ill accords with the teaching of the Council of Trent, which in reference "to that imperfect contrition, that is styled attrition, since it is commonly conceived either from the consideration of the turpitude of sin, or from the fear of hell and punishments, declares, that if it exclude the will of sinning, and be accompanied with the hope of pardon, far from making the man a hypocrite, and greater sinner, it is a gift of God, and a movement of the Holy Ghost, not indeed as yet dwelling in the penitent, but merely exciting him, by the aid whereof he prepares the way for attaining to justice. And although it cannot of itself lead the sinner to justification without the Sacrament of Penance, nevertheless it disposes him to obtain the grace of God in this Sacrament."† Every one sees that the sorrow here described, though imperfect in its motives, is perfect in banishing all sinful affection from the heart, and is not the mere fear of punishment, but a sincere detestation of sin.

Newland, after Burnet, gives us a still more unjust idea of attrition. "Attrition," he says, "is any sorrow for sin, grounded upon an inferior notion, such as the loss or

* Oxford Divinity, p. 194. † Sess. xiv. cap. iv.

shame it has produced, without any resolution of amendment. Such a sorrow as this, they (*Catholics*) teach, makes the Sacrament effectual, and puts a man in a state of justification, though without the Sacrament, it is acknowledged, this effect could not be produced."‡ What can we think of the man who with the decree of the Council of Trent which we have just recited in view, could indite such a libel! The loss or shame which sin has produced is not a motive which can give rise to the sorrows requisite for forgiveness. An usurer who has lost the capital which he lent, allured by the exorbitant profit promised him, may grieve deeply for his avarice, so justly punished, but such sorrow does not qualify him to receive pardon in the sacred tribunal. Shame is equally insufficient to prepare the soul for reconciliation with God. Yet the child of misfortune may be led by the shame which overwhelms her, to consider the intrinsic turpitude of sin; and may estimate the punishments which await it hereafter, from the horror with which, when exposed to general view, it is regarded even by those who themselves are sinners. She may learn the enormity of its guilt, and detest it as the offence of God, and flee abashed and confounded to the feet of his minister. Although she can no more recover the esteem of mankind which she has forfeited, and the beauty of innocence which has been blighted by the seducer, she may obtain pardon from her offended God. Banished and disowned by her earthly parents, and denied the solace of a mother's smile, she may be graciously received by her Father who is in Heaven, and who has promised that he would not forget her, even should the mother forget the child of her womb. As yet she may not

* Analysis, art. xxv. p. 439.

breathe the purity of perfect love, and may not glow with that holy flame, with which the Gospel penitent was consumed when washing the feet of Jesus with her tears. She is struck with terror at the vengeance which she has provoked: she dares not raise her impure eyes to Heaven; but she fixes them on the flames of the abyss wherein impure souls are tormented, in proportion to their former illicit pleasures, day and night for ever and ever. Humbled, penitent, detesting sin, resolved rather to suffer every most excruciating torment than again commit it, receiving with submission shame and all temporal consequences as its just punishment, she cries disconsolate and wretched: O God, be merciful to me a sinner! My father and my mother have forsaken me: wilt not thou, O God, afford me a refuge? It is to such a one that the Sacrament avails to justification. She hates sin from motives dictated by faith: she is firmly determined never to commit it: she fears; she hopes: she loves the beauty and happiness of virtue as reflecting the holiness and justice of God: she is resolved to keep the commandments: she seeks God with her whole heart, and with intense affliction of soul: and is it criminal to believe that the Sacrament aids and supplies the imperfection of her love, and restores her to Divine favour?

The dignity, efficacy, and necessity of the sacraments, as instruments and channels of grace, are grounded on the authority and merits of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and are attested by the most positive testimonies of Scripture, and by the writings of all the ancient Fathers. The advocates of the new system of justification, by the persuasion which each one conceives of the imputation to himself of Christ's righteousness, have not scrupled to bend and suit to their views the clearest passages of Scripture and tradition. All

that the Apostle has said of regeneration and renovation by the sacred laver, they suppose to indicate the external seal of that which already had taken place, independently of the Sacrament, by faith! The positive language of Christ in regard to the necessity of being born anew of water and the Holy Ghost, in order to enter into the kingdom of God, means no more for them than that, "he that contemns being born again of Baptism, and out of this contempt finally neglects it, shall never enter into the kingdom of God."* Thus every thing yields to the false idea conceived of the nature of justifying faith. The institutions of Jesus Christ are stripped of their virtue, and become mere signs, void of all sanctifying power: whilst the confidence which each one conceives of his justification in Christ, is the one thing necessary, the only indispensable condition for the attainment of heaven. Justly, then, does Mr. Newman cry out: "Away then with this modern, this private, this arbitrary, this tyrannical system, which abolishes Sacraments, to introduce dead ordinances; and for the real participation of Christ, and justification through his Spirit, would, at the very marriage feast, feed us on shells and husks, who hunger and thirst after righteousness."†

Bishop M'Ilvaine says: "Nothing is more notorious than the fact that the old, as well as the modern, divines of the Church of England, have regarded the Sacraments of the two dispensations, *circumcision* for example, as standing on precisely the same footing with Baptism, in regard to the spiritual part of the covenant sealed; in other

* Bishop Hopkins (of Raphoe) on the Doctrine of the Sacraments; cited by Bishop M'Ilvaine, ch. x. p. 446.

† Lectures on Justif. p. 61.

words, that the only vital difference was in the sign."* He charges the Oxford divines with innovation, because, in common with Catholics, they maintain that the Christian Sacraments have far greater dignity and efficacy than the Jewish rites: "They came to God," says Mr. Newman, "with rites; He comes to us in Sacraments." † Circumcision having been prescribed to Abraham, long before the delivery of the law through Moses, is not properly a Mosaic rite: but neither it, nor the Jewish rites, can serve to give us an adequate idea of the efficacy of the institutions of Christ. They all were types and figures, shadowing forth the blessings of a better dispensation, wherein the promised Redeemer would impart to his followers grace and salvation. St. Augustin says, "The Sacraments which give salvation, differ from sacraments which promised a Saviour."‡ "Thus," says Dr. Pusey, "did the whole of antiquity understand Holy Scripture. They thought not of comparing the shadows with the substance, the symbols with the reality, the image with the truth, the introductory rites with the witnesses of His Presence."§

All the texts which have been already quoted to prove that baptism is an instrument of justification and regeneration, show that the Christian Sacraments have a virtue which cannot be ascribed to the "weak and needy elements"‖ of the ancient dispensation. The efficacy of the divine Eucharist need not be proved for those who believe it to be the body and blood of Christ, and who bear in mind the words of our Redeemer, whereby the abiding in Him by the most intimate union, is declared to be the pri-

* Oxford Divinity, p. 223.
† Lectures on Justification, p. 327.
‡ In Ps. lxxiii. n. 3.
§ Tract No. 67, p. 255.
‖ Gal iv. 9.

vilege of the receiver.* The forgiveness of sins, to be ratified in Heaven, is annexed to the exercise of the power of binding and loosing.† The Holy Ghost is received when the prelates of the Church impose hands and pray that he may descend to confirm and complete the work which he began in baptism.‡ The gift of God is imparted by the imposition of hands of the priesthood.§ The prayer of faith, accompanying the unction of the sick, saves the sick man whose sins are mercifully forgiven him, when he receives this divine rite.‖

Some passages of St. Augustin are quoted by Bishop M'Ilvaine,¶ after Jewell, to prove that the Sacraments have not inherent efficacy. Boniface, a bishop, had consulted Augustin, and begged a brief reply to his inquiry, why children were said to believe, when presented for Baptism by their sponsors. The holy doctor expressed regret that a short reply should be asked on so important a question. The sum of his answer however, is, the infants, are said to believe, because they receive Baptism, which is the Sacrament of faith. "Was not Christ," he asks, "once immolated in his own person, and nevertheless he is immolated sacramentally for the people, not only throughout the whole Paschal solemnity, but daily: nor surely does the man lie, who when questioned, answers that He is immolated? For if sacraments had not a certain likeness of the things whereof they are sacraments, they would not at all be sacraments. And from this likeness they generally receive the names of the things themselves. As, then, in a certain way the Sacrament of the body of the Christ is the body of Christ, the Sacrament of the blood of Christ is the blood of Christ, so the Sacrament of faith

* John vi. 57. † Ibidem xx. 23. ‡ Acts viii. 17. § 2 Tim. i. 6.
‖ James v. 15. ¶ Oxford Divinity, p. 414.

is faith: and thereby when it is answered that the infant believes, who as yet has not the affection of faith, he is said to have faith on account of the Sacrament of faith."*

The brevity prescribed by Boniface, which Augustine justly regretted, has occasioned the obscurity of this answer, which might otherwise have been avoided. He sought to meet a difficulty by reference to the nature of the Sacraments, which signify objects different from those presented to the eye. Thus the daily sacrifice is the memorial of the one sacrifice of Calvary, to which it bears a similitude, not in its outward form, but in its mysterious continuation of that great offering. It can be said with truth that Christ is immolated every day, but in sacrament, not with the effusion of blood. Thus also the Sacrament itself is called the body and blood of Christ, although to the eye neither is presented in its natural form, but only under the sacramental species. For the same reason Augustin maintains that Baptism, being the sacrament of faith, it may be called faith, and the infant who receives it may be said to have faith, as his sponsors reply in his name.

It is not necessary to examine the solidity of this reply; nor is it fair to appeal to an incidental illustration, which from its acknowledged brevity is obscure, to ascertain the sentiments of this illustrious doctor on the efficacy of the Sacraments, especially as we have other clear and decisive testimonies of his belief. Writing against Faustus, the Manichean, he maintains the necessity of sacraments of some kind to unite men in religious communion, and says that to contemn them is sacrilege, since without them piety cannot exist. Speaking in particular of the Sacraments of the new law, he observes that the words and ac-

* Ep. xcviii. alias xxiii. Bonifacio.

tions employed in them are sacred, but transitory, whilst the virtue of the Sacrament is perpetual: "For God is eternal, but the water and the whole action which is performed in baptizing is transitory, and not eternal: and yet unless these words which are so soon uttered, and which thus pass away be said, whilst God is invoked, the Baptism is not given. All these things are done, and they pass: the sounds are heard and pass away: but the virtue which works by means of them always remains, and the spiritual gift, which is communicated by them, is eternal."*

The reality of the sacrifice is sufficiently asserted in the passage to Boniface, since he maintains that it is no falsehood to affirm that Christ is daily immolated. This is also taught in many other places: "That true Mediator," he says in his celebrated work on the city of God, "inasmuch as taking the form of a servant he became the Mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus, whilst in the form of God he receives sacrifice, together with the Father, with whom he is also the one God, nevertheless in the form of a servant he preferred to be a sacrifice, rather than to receive it, lest even from this circumstance any one should think that sacrifice should be given to any creature. Thereby He is even a priest, himself the offerer, himself the offering. The sacrament whereof he willed that the daily sacrifice of the Church should be: which, as it is the body whereof He is the head, learns to offer herself through him. Of this true sacrifice the ancient sacrifices of the saints were manifold and various signs, since this one was prefigured by many, as if the same thing were expressed in many words, that it might be greatly commended without wearisomeness. All false

* Contra Faustum, l. xix. cap. xvi.

sacrifices have yielded to this sovereign and true sacrifice."* Elsewhere he represents the sacrifice of Melchisedeck as the type of that "sacrifice which is now offered by Christians to God throughout the world:"† and affirms that thus also the prophecy of Malachy is accomplished.‡ This was the general belief of antiquity. Leibnitz has acknowledged that "the Church has always taught the sacrifice to be contained in the Sacrament of the Eucharist," and that "there is nothing in our whole worship more precious than the sacrifice of this divine Sacrament, in which the body of our Lord itself is present."§

The real presence of the body and blood of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, is affirmed by Augustin in numberless places. "With faithful heart and mouth," he says, "we receive the Mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus, giving us his flesh to eat, and his blood to drink, though it seem more shocking to eat human flesh than to kill, and to drink human blood than to shed it."‖ "Let those," he says elsewhere, "who eat the flesh of the Lord, and drink his blood, reflect on what they eat and drink, lest, as the Apostle says, they eat and drink judgment to themselves."¶ "He that takes the Lord's Sacrament unworthily, does not render it an evil thing because he is wicked, nor does he bring it to pass that he received nothing, because he did not receive it unto salvation, for IT IS NEVERTHELESS THE BODY OF THE LORD, AND THE BLOOD OF THE LORD, even to those to whom the Apostle said: He that eateth and drinketh unworthily,"**

* L. x. de civ. Dei c. xx. † L. xvi. c. xxii.
‡ L. xviii. c. xxxv. § Systema Theologicum, pp. 262 6.
‖ L. ii. contra advers. legis et proph.
¶ Tract. de Verbis Domini Serm. xlvi.
** L. v. de Bapt. contra Donat. c. viii.

&c. In another place he writes: "The good separate themselves in heart and manners from the wicked, whilst they eat and drink together the body and blood of the Lord."* Leibnitz explicitly states that this is the doctrine of all Christian antiquity: "Pious antiquity has declared with sufficient clearness, that the bread is changed into the body, and the wine into the blood; and in this the ancients universally acknowledge a change of substance, (μεταστοιχειωσις), which the Latins aptly translated *transubstantiation*."†

The doctrine of St. Bernard, which Bishop M'Ilvaine, after others, objects,‡ is not adverse to the efficacy of the Sacraments, although St. Thomas did not approve of the mode in which it is expressed.§ St. Bernard was treating of sacred signs in general, understanding by the name of 'sacraments' the mysteries of our Lord's passion, as well as his institutions, and therefore observed that "there are many sacraments"; but he proposed to treat only of three, namely, Baptism, Eucharist, and the washing of the feet, which being classed with the sacraments, shows the vague meaning in which the term is applied by this pious writer. He uses various examples by way of illustration, not meaning to establish a perfect analogy between them and the true Sacraments, of which he speaks in terms the most unequivocal. Having mentioned the giving of a ring as a token of an inheritance, and the investing of a canon by the delivery of a book, of an Abbot by a staff, of a Bishop by crozier and ring, he says: "As in these things (*there is diversity*) so also there are various graces attached to various sacraments. What is the grace

* Contra Donat. post collat. c. xx. n. 27.

† Systema Theologicum, p. 222-6.

‡ P. 394. § III. par. qu. lxii. art. 1. Resp.

wherewith we are invested by Baptism? Certainly the purging away of sins. For who can make him clean who is conceived of unclean seed, but God, who alone is pure and without sin?"* To this he objects that concupiscence still remains, and he solves the difficulty by saying, "We are then washed in Baptism, Because the handwriting of our condemnation is blotted out: and this grace is conferred on us, that concupiscence should not be hurtful to us, provided we abstain from consenting." He then observes that the Eucharist further strengthens us: "Be of good heart, since in this also grace succours you, and that you may be secure, you receive the investiture at the price of the Sacrament of the body and blood of the Lord. For this Sacrament produces two effects in us, namely, it lessens the sensual feeling in small matters, and it utterly takes away consent in grievous things. If any of you does not experience such frequent and strong impulses to anger, envy, luxury, or other vices, let him give thanks to the body and blood of the Lord, since the virtue of the Sacrament works in him."*

The opinion which St. Thomas of Aquin combats in the passage referred to by Bishop M'Ilvaine, seems to be that the Sacraments are the moral but not physical causes of grace, God directly producing it, when they are administered. "We must of necessity affirm," observes St. Thomas, "that the Sacraments of the new law cause grace in some way: for it is manifest that man is incorporated with Christ by means of the Sacraments of the new law, as the Apostle says of Baptism, in the third chapter to the Galatians. 'As many of you as have been baptized in Christ, have put on Christ.' Now man is not made a

* Serm. in Cœna Domini.

member of Christ, unless by grace. Some, however, say, that they are not the cause of grace by effecting any thing, but because God produces grace in the soul when the sacraments are administered." This latter opinion he rejects, because it would appear to reduce the sacraments to mere signs, "when nevertheless it is clear from many authorities of the saints, that the sacraments of the new law not only signify but cause grace." He proceeds to explain the difference between a principal and an instrumental cause: and he acknowledges that God is the principal cause of grace; but maintains that the sacraments are instrumental causes, "for they are applied to men by divine appointment to cause grace in them."* This he confirms by a testimony of St. Augustin, and by the noted passage of St. Paul: "He saved us by the laver of regeneration."†

The physical or moral efficacy of the sacraments is still a subject of free discussion in the schools, Catholic faith only teaching that grace is annexed to them, and is imparted whenever no obstacle exists to its reception.— Though the illustrations employed by St. Bernard are favorable to the moral efficacy, rather than the physical, his language concerning the sacraments themselves, appears to indicate a physical power lodged in them by their Divine Author. In either case he does not question their true efficacy; and the observation of St. Thomas, that this mode of explanation would reduce them to mere signs, refers rather to an inference that might be drawn from the bare illustrations, than to the sentiment of St. Bernard. It is manifest that the efficacy of the sacraments was an undisputed point in the days of St. Thomas, and was con-

* III. p. qu. lxii. art. 1. Resp. † Titus iii. 5.

sidered a Scriptural truth, sustained by tradition ; and that the whole difficulty regarded the mode or manner in which they produce their effects.

The failure of the sacraments to sanctify such as approach them unworthily, is no argument against their intrinsic efficacy. They are powerful remedies; but for their right application the patient must take them in the manner prescribed by the heavenly Physician. They impart divine gifts in a manner worthy of the sanctity and wisdom of the Donor. The heart must be prepared to receive the seed of life: and whoever cares not by humility and compunction to break up the hard soil, must not wonder if the sun shine in vain, and the rains fall to no purpose. Hence Dr. Pusey remarks concerning Simon Magus, his case "is no proof that God withholds His grace from His sacraments, except when man disqualifies himself from receiving it."*

It is gratifying to perceive that the efficacy of the sacraments is acknowledged by this learned divine, and that he shows no unwillingness to extend the appellation, although with some qualification, to other rites which the Anglican Articles treat disparagingly.† Mr. Newman, with some ingenuity, states that two sacraments are admitted "as generally necessary to salvation," and specifies three others which partake of the sacramental character. "Ordination," he says, "gives *power*, yet without making the soul *acceptable* to God; confirmation gives *light and strength*, yet is the mere completion of baptism; and absolution may be viewed as a negative ordinance, removing the barrier which sin has raised between us, and that grace which by inheritance is ours."‡ It is true, that ordination

* Tract 67, p. 187. † Art. xxv. ‡ Tract No. 90, § 7.

does not make us acceptable to God, because it supposes that the person ordained is already in the state of grace: it gives him power and a divine gift χαρισμα to exercise worthily the functions of the sacred ministry, and therefore increases the grace which he already possesses, and makes him more acceptable to God. The light and strength imparted in confirmation are the grace of the Holy Ghost. The removal of the barrier of sin effects our reconciliation with God. Mr. Newman admits all the sacraments in a qualified sense: "This Article," he says, "does not deny the five rites in question to be sacraments."* Of marriage Dr. Pusey writes: "Marriage is a mystery as pourtraying the union of the Church with Christ; is not a sacrament as not conveying it."† It may not, however, be denied this title, when it is considered that from the honorable mention made of it by St. Paul, and by the Fathers of the Church, it is fairly deduced that it conveys grace to those who enter into this state, whereby their union may be a fit emblem of the divine union of Christ with his Church. In the Book of Homilies it is said: "By holy promises, we be made lively members of Christ, receiving the sacrament of baptism. By like holy promises *the sacrament of matrimony* knitteth man and wife in perpetual love."‡

The recognition of the efficacy of the sacraments, far from detracting from the mystery of redemption, sets it forth in all its fulness. We are not left with mere signs, or tokens, or emblems; but in virtue of the merits of our Redeemer, we receive grace, and strength, and life, through rites divinely instituted to convey them to our souls. This,

* Tract No. 90, § 7. † Tract No 67, p. 154.

‡ 1 B. vii. 1. quoted by Mr. Newman in Tract No. 90, p. 71.

as Dr. Pusey observes, was the consolation of the ancient Christians: "In his sacraments He was with them; He fed them in the eucharist; He washed away their sins in baptism; and baptism was to them salvation, and the cross, and the resurrection, because He opened their eyes to see not only the visible minister, but Himself working invisibly; not only the water, but the blood: and the Holy Spirit, the third witness, applying the blood, through the water to the cleansing of the soul."*

* Tract No. 67, p. 142.

CHAPTER XIII.

PLENARY JUSTIFICATION.

JUSTIFICATION is, as we have seen, the translation of the sinner from the state of sin to the state of grace, from death to life: and is plenary and perfect, whensoever all the punishment of sin, together with the sin itself, is pardoned. This takes place in Baptism which is the ablution of all stains, the renovation of the soul, the regeneration whereby the child of wrath, becomes a child of God. The justification of one who has violated his baptismal engagements is rarely so perfect according to Catholic doctrine, to which the Oxford divines assent. Dr. Pusey says: "If after having been washed once for all, in Christ's blood, we again sin, there is no more such complete absolution in this life: no restoration to the same state of undisturbed security in which God had by Baptism placed us." * This, however, is not accurate, since God does pardon unreservedly those who with entire and perfect love and sorrow flee to his mercy. Bishop M'Ilvaine more liberally dispenses Divine pardon to the believer. Of the Homilies he says: "They teach us that when it is said in the Article, that 'by faith we are accounted righteous before God', we are to understand no less than that whenever a sinner believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, though his sins be red as scarlet, and as many as the sands on the sea shore, the righteousness

* Scriptural Views of Baptism.

of Christ is so perfectly made over to him, that he stands, in Him, before God, as having nothing laid to his charge, his sins remembered no more, his justification as perfect as was that of Adam before he sinned: no more capable of being increased than that of the beloved in whom he is accepted."* On the contrary, Macknight observes that the Scriptures "do not even say, that Christ's righteousness is counted, or imputed to believers; far less that they are made perfectly righteous thereby: which is an impossibility,—because no person can be perfectly righteous in the sight of God, but one who hath never sinned." † It is indeed impossible to bring it to pass that sin already committed should not have existed; but God can certainly by his Almighty power invest the soul with any perfection that is communicable to a creature.

The application of the merits of Christ in Baptism is after the manner of an ablution, which washes the individual from all stain; but it is not the lot of every penitent who has forfeited baptismal innocence, to receive an equally liberal application of the atoning blood. The Corinthian was subjected to public humiliation for his enormous crime; and when penitent, he was not restored to the privileges which he had forfeited, until the Apostle, using the power given him by Christ, forgave in his name whatever still remained to be atoned for, lest perhaps the unhappy man should be overwhelmed with exceeding grief. ‡ It has always been the persuasion of the Christian Church, that sins committed after Baptism are not pardoned with equal facility and plenitude as the errors of ignorance and passion that preceded the Baptismal laver.

* Charge to the Clergy of Ohio in 1838.

† Essay vi. on Justification. ‡ 2 Cor. ii. 10.

In the ancient dispensation the assurance given by the prophet Nathan to David, that the Lord had taken away his sin, did not prevent the penitent King from seeking a more complete purification than he had yet obtained: "Wash me yet more from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin." * He was also assured by the prophet that the child, the fruit of his adultery, should die, although his sin was pardoned: "Here is a perspicuous instance of a penitent restored to God's favour, at once, yet his sins afterwards visited." †

Macknight argues that there is no justification until the day of judgment, because sin continues to be visited with temporal chastisements: "If believers are pardoned in this life, they must in this life be delivered from the punishment of sin, that is from diseases and death, and every evil which at the fall was inflicted on mankind as the punishment of Adam's sin." ‡ This is an unwarrantable conclusion, because temporal evils may serve as the exercise of patience, or may be a partial chastisement and a salutary preservative against relapse. We cannot doubt that David's sin was really taken away, although the death of his child followed, to punish, in a temporal way, that crime the guilt whereof, with the eternal punishment, was remitted. So does it often happen that temporal calamities befall the servants of God for sins of their former life of which they obtained forgiveness. Poverty, sickness, persecution are oftentimes the consequences of former sins, which, if the sinner accept with humility, will serve for his more perfect purification. When David fled from the royal city, of which his rebellious son had taken posses-

* Ps. l. † Tracts Vol. iv. No. 79.

‡ Essay vi. on Justification. § 5.

sion, as he "went up by the ascent of mount Olivet, going up and weeping, walking bare-foot, and with his head covered"; * he humbly recognised the just visitation of God, whereby his sins were punished. Thus does God unite the exercise of justice with mercy, and vindicates, even in the sight of men, the indulgence wherewith he treats the penitent. The pardon is true and real, as was that of Absalom, when permitted by his father to return from exile, although not allowed to present himself in the royal presence. If man can temper mercy with justice, in releasing a criminal from capital punishment, and yet subjecting him to imprisonment, or other penalty, what can prevent God pardoning sin, and yet subjecting the sinner to some chastisement?

The ancient penitential discipline, which was reduced to system so far back as the third century, and which existed substantially from the commencement, as is evident from the writings of Tertullian, Hermes, and others, was grounded on the belief that the same plenary pardon was not ordinarily granted to those who had forfeited baptismal grace, as had been imparted at the sacred font. Public humiliations and private austerities were enjoined, and, according to the grievousness of the sin, a period was fixed before the expiration of which the sinner was not restored to the privileges of Christian communion. The reparation of the scandal given was not the only or primary motive of this severity; but the persuasion that the sinner owed a debt to divine justice, although his faith and sorrow might have secured forgiveness of the guilt of his sin, was the principle on which it was grounded. He wept, he prostrated himself, he fasted on bread and water, he cast

* 2 Kings xv. 30.

himself at the feet of his more happy brethren to ask their prayers; and, clothed in sackcloth and covered with ashes, he awaited until the Bishop deemed his satisfaction complete, or, having regard to his fervor or his weakness, extended to him the *indulgence* of the Church. St. Pacian describes the penitent as "weeping in the sight of the Church, in a penitential garb, mourning over the excesses of his past life, fasting, praying, prostrating himself, and when invited to enjoy the luxury of the bath declining the invitation; when invited to a banquet, replying: 'These enjoyments are for the innocent. I have had the misfortune to sin against the Lord, and am in danger of perishing everlastingly." * St. Augustin shows the wisdom of this economy which God observes towards the sinner, in requiring penitential humiliation, even after forgiveness has been granted. "Man," he says, "is obliged to suffer, even after the remission of his sins, although sin was in the first instance the cause of his being subjected to misery. The punishment continues after the fault has been taken away, lest the fault should be deemed trivial, if the punishment terminated with it. And thereby either to show the misery due to sin, or to correct frailty, or to exercise necessary patience, man is subject to temporal punishment, even when sin does not hold him liable to everlasting damnation." † St. Cyprian inveighed against the hasty admission of apostates to the privileges which they had forfeited, and insisted that the Divine justice required severe satisfaction: "It is necessary to pray and implore God with earnestness, to pass the days in mourning, to spend the nights in watching and weeping, to devote

* Parænesis ad Pœnitentiam.

† Tract, cxxiv. in Joan. n. 5.

all one's time to tearful lamentations, prostrate on the earth to cling to ashes, to lie wrapped in sackcloth."——"He that shall thus satisfy God, he that through penitence for his crime, he that through shame for his delinquency, shall conceive greater virtue and faith from the very sorrow for his fall, being favourably heard, and being succoured by the Lord, will fill the Church with joy, which he recently afflicted, and will obtain not only the pardon of God, but a crown from him." * When Dr. Pusey says that the Protestant system gives peace which it has not to bestow, he, probably, had in view a celebrated passage of St. Cyprian, who styles the hasty reconciliation of apostates: "a vain and fallacious peace, dangerous to those who give it, and of no use to the receiver."

The ancient discipline of the Church and the testimonies of the early Fathers, accordingly sanction the belief, that the justification of the sinner after baptism is not generally so complete as to free him from all debt of temporal punishment: and this belief is conformable to the dealings of God with sinners under the ancient dispensation, as the example of David shows. If any one demand direct proof from the New Testament, that God observes the same economy towards delinquents, who by voluntary sin have forfeited the grace of baptism, we observe that the Corinthian was not pardoned, until he had given such signs of deep sorrow, as rendered it likely that he would be overwhelmed with excessive grief, unless the indulgence of the Church were extended to him; and that the Apostle in granting it, professed to forgive him in the name of Christ, which supposes a debt still remaining, notwithstanding his compunction. "What I have pardoned,"

* L. de lapsis.

he says, "if I have pardoned any thing, for your sakes have I done it, in the person of Christ."* Besides the enormity of sin committed after baptism is so strongly declared in Scripture, that we should be led to believe it altogether unpardonable, unless we bore in mind the power of forgiveness lodged in the Apostolic ministry. "For it is impossible", says St. Paul, "for those who were once illuminated, have tasted also the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, have moreover tasted the good power of God, and the powers of the world to come, and are fallen away, to be renewed again to penance."† "If we sin wilfully after having the knowledge of the truth, there is now left no sacrifice for sins, but a certain dreadful expectation of judgment, and the rage of a fire which shall consume the adversaries."‡ Though these texts be specially referred to the crime of apostacy, yet it will be difficult to limit them to this crime, without the guiding light of tradition; as it will be impossible to ascertain on what conditions sins in general, committed after baptism, are to be forgiven, unless we abide by the authoritative teaching and solemn practice of those to whom Christ imparted the power of forgiveness. Since, then, from their teaching and practice, in the earliest and purest times, the necessity of penitential satisfaction is manifest, we are bound to believe that the justification of the sinner after baptism is oftentimes attended with subjection to temporal punishment. Dr. Pusey has laboured to show that the article of the Church of England which declares that "they are to be condemned that deny the

* 2 Cor. ii. 10, εἴ τι κεχαρισμαι is equivalent to "whatsoever it may be that I have pardoned."

† Heb. vi. 6. § Ib. x. 26.

place of forgiveness to such as truly repent," does not necessarily imply plenary pardon. "But who *truly* repent; when a man who has been guilty of sin after baptism may be satisfied that he is truly repentant for it; whether and to what degree he should all his life continue his repentance for it—wherein his penitence should consist; whether continued repentance would efface the traces of sin in himself; whether he might ever in this life look upon himself as restored to the state in which he had been, had he not committed it; whether it affect the degree of his future bliss, or its effects be effaced by repentance; but their extinction depend upon the continued greatness of his repentance; whether cessation of his active repentance may not bring back degrees of the sin upon him; whether it shall appear again in the day of Judgment: these and the like are questions upon which the Article does not speak."*

It is to us of little moment how far the Article may be reconcileable with the doctrine of the Catholic Church, whilst we find our principles in perfect harmony with the ancient doctrine and practice. We do not participate in the doubts of Dr. Pusey, for we know that plenary justification may be obtained by the true penitent, if the intenseness of his grief and ardor of his love bear proportion to the grievousness of his offences. Many sins were forgiven to her who loved much: and whoever seeks God with all his heart and with entire affliction of soul may obtain full remission. There is no limit to Divine mercy. In a moment the enormities of years may be cancelled, and every trace of sin obliterated, and the soul invested with snow-white purity. Divine justice may yield all its

* Letter to Bishop of Oxford.

rights, and the sinner may stand justified, absolved, acquitted of all debt of satisfaction. The Council of Trent has only condemned whosoever should assert that "after receiving the grace of justification sin is remitted, and the liability to eternal punishment cancelled for any penitent sinner whatsoever, in such a way as that there remain no liability to temporal punishment to be suffered either in this life or in the future world in Purgatory, before the entrance to the kingdom of heaven be open." This assertion is justly anathematized.*

But we have reason to fear that intense and perfect contrition rarely exists, and it is not conformable to Divine wisdom to admit to reconciliation on the same terms the sinner who barely estranges his affections from sin, and the penitent who bitterly and constantly weeps for his prevarications. The most powerful incentive to perfect contrition is found in the unqualified pardon which it may obtain; and a salutary restraint is put on the repentant sinner, by the consideration, that although he may have found mercy by repentance, there may still be a heavy debt to Divine justice, for which satisfaction should be made by penitential humiliations. He is taught, therefore, as St. Chrysostom in his day exhorted penitents, to deny himself in proportion as he had sought unlawful indulgence. If he has quaffed the intoxicating draught, let him abstain even from moderate use of the dangerous potion: if he has glutted his appetite, making a god of his belly, let him fast: if he has given loose reins to passion, let him observe continence. The uncertainty of his sorrow, as long as he is neglectful of penitential exercises, is usefully employed to rouse him from his torpor. Christ has paid his ran-

* Sess. VI. Can. xxx. de Justific.

som: but He will not have it applied to the tepid, and slothful, much less to the impenitent. Let sinners, then, humble their souls in fasting, with hope in Divine mercy, tempered with fear of the rigor of Divine justice: "Who can tell," said the alarmed Ninivites, "if God will turn, and forgive, and will turn away from his fierce anger, and we shall not perish?"* St. Jerome justly remarks on this text: "It is put as doubtful and uncertain, that men, being uncertain of their salvation, may do penance more strenuously, and may thereby more effectually move God to mercy."†

These terms which we propose to sinners in the name of God, who is at once both just and merciful, are somewhat more severe than the consoling doctrine, that we are fully justified the moment we apprehend by faith the righteousness of Christ: but they are nothing more than what the prophets of the Old Law, and the Apostles preached,—penance unto the remission of sins. It is described by Christ himself as manifested in humiliation in sackcloth and ashes. It is the deep feeling of the soul that leads the sinner to the feet of Jesus there to weep: it draws bitter tears even from the bold blasphemer: it separates the incestuous from the object of passion: it bows down the sinner to the earth, and makes him strike his breast in sorrow: it bids every delinquent know and see that it is an evil and a bitter thing to have forsaken the Lord his God: it enters into his inmost soul, and displays itself in all his actions: it makes him know his iniquity, and have his sin always before him, and go sorrowful all the day long. But it is not void of consolation, for he knows that a contrite and humble heart God will not despise: and in the

* Jonas iii. 9. † In locum.

very depth of his sorrow he exclaims with the Psalmist: "According to the multitude of my sorrows in my heart, thy comforts have given joy to my soul."*

When we speak of satisfaction to divine justice to be rendered by the sinner, we must be understood of such penal endurance as, through the merits of Jesus Christ, may be accepted by God in atonement for our sins. The malice of sin is in some measure infinite, being directed against the sovereignty of God; and therefore the atonement should have an infinite dignity and value, such as we recognise in the sufferings and death of the God-man, Christ Jesus. No satisfaction can be offered that does not derive all its value from the sacrifice of the cross: but it is not derogatory to the infinite merit of this atonement, to believe that its application depends on certain dispositions of mind, excited by divine grace; and that plenary remission is not granted unless to intense penitence, which is ordinarily manifested in penitential works. These satisfy for the temporal punishment due to sin, its guilt being washed away by the blood of Christ, which also gives value to them, and makes them acceptable to God. It is a misrepresentation of our doctrine to insinuate, as Newland does, that we suppose Christ to satisfy for the eternal punishment, and ourselves to satisfy for the temporal punishment.† We believe Christ to have abundantly satisfied for sin, and for its punishment in time and eternity: "Christ was offered once to exhaust the sins of many."‡ Our satisfactions are conditions, according to the plan which His wisdom devised for the application to us of his all-sufficient atonement: they derive from him all their efficacy.

All the reliance of the sinner for pardon is on the infi-

* Ps. xciii. 19. † Analysis, p. 191. Note. ‡ Heb. ix. 28.

nite mercy of God, through his Redeemer Jesus Christ. He does not put forward his penitential works as entitling him to indulgence; but he repeats incessantly, "Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy great mercy, and according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my iniquities."* The sight of the cross recalls to his mind the enormity of sin, and the abundance of the atonement, and he appeals to the Father: "Look on the face of thy Christ." No one feels more deeply than he the need he has of a Saviour; but at the same time he knows that the atoning blood is applied only to the true penitent; and therefore is he anxious to banish from his heart every sinful affection, and to punish his sinful flesh for his former unlawful gratification.

* Ps. l.

CHAPTER XIV.

INCREASE OF JUSTICE.

The Council of Trent anathematized whosoever should "say that justice, when received, is not preserved and even increased before God by good works."* This increase of justice means nothing more than that the justified man becomes more acceptable to God in proportion to his zeal in practising good works, and receives new gifts and grace whereby the soul is adorned and sanctified. Our ideas of this increase are necessarily imperfect, as we cannot easily conceive the ornaments and privileges of a spiritual substance. The denial of inherent justice necessarily involves a denial of its increase. If justification be a mere extrinsic relation, the sinner being accounted just for Christ's sake, without being made just in reality, there can, of course, be no increase, where justice itself does not exist. As in this hypothesis, the whole righteousness of Christ is at once transferred to the justified man, increase is also

* Bishop M'Ilvaine quotes the Council, p. 284, as saying, "If any one shall say that justification once obtained, is not increased by good works, but that these are only the fruits and signs of justification, let him be accursed"! The canon should be translated thus—"If any one shall say that *justice*, when received, is not preserved, and even not increased before God by good works; but that the works themselves are only the fruits and signs of justification obtained, and not the cause of its increase; let him be anathema." Sess. vi. can. xxiv. de justif.

impossible: wherefore Bishop M'Ilvaine asserts that the righteousness of the justified man can no more be increased than that of the Beloved, in whom he is accepted. On the contrary, according to Catholic doctrine, the just man, by faithfully corresponding with grace already received, becomes more pleasing to God, receives more intimate and abundant communications of grace, and is advanced in sanctity and perfection. Hooker, however, has led Bishop M'Ilvaine into error, by asserting that in our divinity the first receipt of grace is the first justification: the increase thereof the second justification—such is not our language.

The progress of the just in the exercise of virtue is likened in the Scripture to the gradual increase of light, from the morning dawn to the meridian blaze. "The path of the just," says the wise man, "as a shining light, goeth forward, and increaseth unto perfect day."* This is conformable to what is witnessed in the lives of the servants of God. Their compunction for sin becomes more intense; their zeal for the glory of God more ardent; their love of God more perfect; their charity for their neighbour more tender; the light of their works daily shines with greater brightness, and the flame of their devotion communicates the warmth of divine love to the lukewarm and cold. No one can question that such progress in virtue has uniformly marked the career of the saints, who having practised in retirement the virtues more immediately regarding their own sanctification, were urged forward by the charity of Christ to gain sinners to his love. Can we doubt that they were daily more acceptable to God, in proportion to the intenseness of their compunction and the ardor of their love? Does it not show forth, in an ad-

* Prov. iv. 18.

mirable manner, the Divine wisdom and goodness, that by new sacrifices for the glory of God, and new triumphs over themselves, they constantly acquired new graces, which prepared them for greater trials? This is manifest in the life of the patriarch Abraham. God called him forth from his country and his kindred; and this just man, living by faith, went forth in obedience to the divine command, and abode in a strange land, with entire dependence on the will and providence of Him in whom he believed. He received afterwards the assurance that his race would be in number like the stars of heaven, and he believed it, although it was naturally impossible, considering his advanced age and that of Sara: and his faith was reputed to him unto justice. The righteousness which he already had was confirmed and increased; and a new attestation was divinely given of his acceptance with God. But a sublimer exercise of faith was yet required of him. He was ordered to immolate Isaac; and thus was his paternal affection, and his trust in the divine promises, subjected to the severest trial. His faith triumphed. He ascended the mount, leading the loved son by his side, and prepared the wood, and bound the victim, and raised the arm to immolate him: when the angel of God withheld him from consummating the act, assuring him that he had, by his faith and obedience, merited peculiar blessings. The promises are renewed with an oath: "By my own self have I sworn, saith the Lord; because thou hast done this thing, and hast not spared thy only begotten son for my sake: I will bless thee, and I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand that is by the sea shore: thy seed shall possess the gates of their enemies. And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou

hast obeyed my voice."* "Was not Abraham our father justified by works," asks St. James, "offering up Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou that faith did co-operate with his works: and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled, saying: Abraham believed God, and it was reputed to him unto justice, and he was called the friend of God."† As he was already just, by the declaration of St. Paul, his justification here must mean an increase of justice, whereby he became, in a stricter sense than before, the friend of God.

In numberless passages of the New Testament, we are exhorted to advance in the path of perfection, by the exercise of good works. St. Paul, in his epistle to the Ephesians, declares the diversity of gifts and graces in the various classes and individuals in the Church: "To every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the giving of Christ;"‡ and he states that the hierarchy is divinely established "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: until we all meet into the unity of faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ, that .... doing the truth in charity, we may in all things grow up in him who is the head, Christ."§ There is, then, a spiritual growth in the just man: he passes from infancy to mature age; whilst corresponding with grace he receives new gifts, by which his growth in Christ is promoted. St. Peter, on this account, exhorts the faithful "to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."‖ Their efforts are necessary, for God does not

* Gen. xxii. 16. † James ii. 21. ‡ Eph. iv. 7.
§ Ibidem 12. ‖ 2 Peter iii. 18.

encourage torpor and tepidity, but aids and strengthens the humble and diligent.

St. Paul declares his own untiring efforts to attain to the perfection of Christian virtue, and to its reward in the heavenly kingdom: "Not," says he, "as though I had already attained, or were already made perfect; but I follow after, if I may by any means apprehend, wherein I am also apprehended by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended. But one thing I do: forgetting the things that are behind, and stretching forth myself to those that are before, I press towards the mark, to the prize of the supernal vocation of God in Christ Jesus."* Even he, although favoured with an extraordinary vocation, did not believe himself to have instantly attained to perfection; but he felt that his own constant efforts, in correspondence with grace, were necessary for its attainment. Jesus Christ had mercifully placed him in the career, and it was his duty to follow after, and stretch forward incessantly to the goal. Hence he labored more than all the rest; not, however, he alone, but the grace of God in him and with him. Whilst his heart glowed with holy zeal, and his tongue darted heavenly fire, can we doubt that he was daily more and more acceptable to God, to whom he was approaching, and in whom he was finally to rest, in ineffable communion?

That an increase of graces should depend on our fidelity in corresponding with grace already received, is conformable to the parable of the talents, wherein the divine economy is represented. The talent which the slothful servant neglected to employ is taken from him, and given to him who had ten talents, and who by their useful employment

* Phil. iii. 12.

had proved himself worthy of greater gifts. Nothing is taken from the gratuitous character of grace, when that fidelity, which is itself the fruit of grace, is believed to deserve a higher degree of grace, according to the order which God has freely established. He thereby encourages his servants to co-operate strenuously with grace, and rewards their obedience, without at all dividing with them his glory. If it is objected that we are thus led to confide in ourselves, to ascribe to ourselves the gifts of grace, and rather to calculate the number of our devotional exercises, and good works, than to look to the cross of Christ for grace and salvation, we most emphatically deny the consequence.

It is in God we put our trust, who, as he began a good work in us, will perfect it unto the day of Christ Jesus.* Although "we can do all things in him who strengthens us," it is "not that we are sufficient to think any thing of ourselves, as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God."† With fear and trembling we have been taught to work out our salvation; for it is God "who worketh in us both to will and to accomplish, according to his good will."‡ With the Psalmist we cry: "Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to thy name give glory."§ We make no calculations of the number of our works, and build not our hopes upon their multitude: but we know that it behoves us to run so that we may obtain the prize, and, forgetting the space already passed over, to stretch forward towards the goal. Not esteeming ourselves secure of the attainment of the heavenly crown, we feel deeply the necessity of increased exertion. Therefore do we with redoubled efforts strive to enter by the narrow gate, lest with the

* Phil. i. 6. † 2 Cor. iii. 5.
‡ Phil. ii. 12. § Ps. cxiii.

slothful and tepid we be excluded. It is necessary for us to be instant in prayer:* and to be diligent in the exercise of good works in order to make our calling and election sure.† If a consciousness of corresponding with divine grace to the best of our ability, although with much imperfection, affords us confidence, it is accompanied with a deep sense of our manifold offences, and a fear lest we should become reprobate. Such a confidence is grounded on the merits and grace of our Redeemer, and is commended in many passages of Holy Writ: "Tribulation worketh patience; and patience trial; and trial hope: and hope confoundeth not."‡ The Apostle St. Paul exhorted the Hebrews who had endured much for the Gospel, to persevere, in the confidence of eternal retribution: "Do not therefore lose your confidence, which hath a great reward."§ St. John likewise animates us to perseverance by the hope of this reward: "He that is just let him be justified still: and he that is holy let him be sanctified still. Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to render to every man according to his works."‖

The righteousness of Christ, which is the meritorious or procuring cause of justification, is doubtless perfect: but it is wrong to confound it with our justification, for the effect should be distinguished from its cause. Our justice and sanctity is imperfect. Some are infants, who, although nourished only with milk, are yet capable of advancing "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ."¶ "We are by baptism," writes Dr. Pusey, "brought into a state of salvation or justification, (for the words are thus far equivalent,) a state into which

* Rom. xii. 12. † 2 Peter i. 10. ‡ Rom. v. 3.
§ Heb. x. 35. ‖ Apoc. xxii. 11. ¶ Eph. iv. 13.

we were brought of God's free mercy alone without works, but in which having been placed, we are to 'work out our salvation with fear and trembling,' through the indwelling Spirit of 'God,' working in us to will and to do of his good pleasure'; a state admitting of degrees according to the degree of sanctification—(although the first *act* whereby we were brought into it did not;) a state admitting of relapses and recoveries, but which is weakened by every relapse, injured by lesser, destroyed for the time by grievous sin; and after such sin, recovered with difficulty, in proportion to the greatness of the sin, and the degree of its wilfulness and of the grace withstood."* Speaking of Cornelius, he says: "as the prayers, the almsgiving, the fasting of Cornelius were the fruit of faith in God, and of the guidance of His Spirit, the imparting of grace after grace has nothing to do with the question of human fitness. It is but God's ordinary method of dealing with us to proportion His subsequent gifts to the use which we have made of those before bestowed."†

Mr. Newman likewise avows Catholic principles on this point. "Christians," he says, "are justified by the communication of an inward, most sacred, and most mysterious gift. From the very time of Baptism, they are temples of the Holy Ghost. This is what is common to all. The fact that we are the Temple of God does not admit of more or less. Righteousness then, considered as the state of being God's temple, cannot be increased, but considered as the divine glory which that state implies, it can be increased, as the pillar of cloud which guided the Israelites could become more or less bright. Justification being acceptableness with God, all beings who are justified

* Letter pp. 54. 55. † Tract 67 on Baptism, p. 176.

differ from all who are not, in their very condition. In this sense, it is as absurd to speak of our being more justified, as of life, or colour, or any other abstract idea, increasing. But when we compare the various orders of just and acceptable beings with one another, we see that though they all are in God's favour, some may be more pleasant, acceptable, righteous, than others, that is, may have more of the light of God's countenance shed on them ; in this sense their justification does admit of increase and degrees, and whether we say justification depends on faith or on obedience, in the same degree that faith or obedience grows, so does justification. And again, as Holy Communion conveys a more *awful* presence of God, than Holy Baptism, so must it be the instrument of a higher justification."* Melancthon had long since acknowledged that our action should be united with the gifts of God, which it preserves, and whereof it merits an increase.† Thus has the Catholic doctrine on this point received the homage of men separated from the communion of the Church. It is besides evidently conformable to reason enlightened by faith to believe, that the servants of God should advance in holiness by each new act of devotion and love, and it is a powerful incentive to earnest exertion in the performance of good works.

* Lect. pp. 168, 169. † Art. vi. Synt. Gen. p. 21.

CHAPTER XV.

MORTAL AND VENIAL SIN.

The Apostle St. James has declared that "in many things we all offend."* Experience gives melancholy evidence of this truth, and furnishes us with proofs of the great variety of human offences. No rational being can, for a moment, doubt that there is a vast difference between the guilt of a lie told for mere amusement, and involving no injury to any one, and an atrocious calumny whereby an innocent person is seriously injured in his property or character. Bishop Hall, however, observes: "some offences are more heinous than others, yet all in the malignity of their nature are deadly. If we have respect unto the infinite mercy of God, and to the object of his mercy—the penitent and faithful heart, there is no sin which is not venial; but, in respect to the disorder, there is no sin which is not worthy of eternal death."† The present Bishop of Exeter says: "Let it never be absent from our minds, that every wilful sin is deadly—and let us beware of hardening our own hearts, and corrupting the hearts of our brethren—by whispering to ourselves or them which sin is more or less deadly than others. That which we may deem the least will be deadly enough, if unrepented, to work our perdition:—those which we deem the most deadly, will, if repented, have been thoroughly washed

* James iii. 2. † Bp. Hall's works, ix. p. 57.

away in the blood of our Redeemer."* The sixteenth Article of the Church of England says that "not every deadly sin, willingly committed after Baptism is sin against the Holy Ghost and unpardonable;" whereon Bishop Beveridge observes "every deadly sin means every sin, for every sin is deadly."† Bishop Bull, however, says that: "Nowhere in the Gospel is such will of God revealed to us, whereby the punishment of eternal damnation is reserved for the slightest defect of justice which might be avoided."‡ In this, as well as in other matters, the Oxford Divines have adopted the views of this eminent writer; and they, accordingly, understand mortal sins to be such as "are either done willingly or are of any magnitude."§ The Presbyterian Catechism states, that "every sin, even the least, being against the sovereignty, goodness, and holiness of God, and against his righteous law, deserveth his wrath and curse, both in this life, and that which is to come."‖

The Catholic doctrine distinguishes mortal from venial sin, without regard to the faith of the individual. By mortal sin we understand a grievous transgression of divine law, such as involves a disregard of the divine authority, a preference of the creature, as our end and happiness, to the Creator. Venial sin is a slight offence, which does not imply the preference of the creature to the Creator, or the disregard of divine authority. Murder and adultery, are manifestly mortal sins, because directly opposed to the positive command of God, and involving the violation of the rights of our fellow man in matters

* In his late charge. † Beveridge on the Articles.
‡ Examen Censuræ, Resp. ad animadv. xix. § 18.
§ Tract, No. 71. ‖ Larger Catechism, ii. 152.

of high importance. Blasphemy and idolatry are crimes of great magnitude, against the honor of God. Drunkenness and incontinence are mortal sins, implying a grievous disorder in one's self, opposed to the dignity of human nature, and consequently to the glory of its Creator. When wealth is made the primary object of man's pursuits, so that he places his whole happiness in its attainment, the vice of avarice is indulged, which is called idolatry, because money becomes the god, the last end and supreme happiness of the individual. When pleasure is above all other considerations in our mind, and the ruling passion of our heart, the belly is styled god; and no doubt can be entertained of the grievous character of the vice, since the end of those who indulge it is destruction. The vices of the tongue, as well as external actions, may contaminate the soul with mortal guilt. Detractors, who wantonly expose the secret frailty of the unfortunate, and still more, calumniators, who falsely accuse the innocent, are hateful to God. Perjury is mortal; and the vice of swearing is attended with many mortal sins, since he who swears to do evil, outrages the sanctity of God, by making him the voucher for crime, and he who swears rashly, oftentimes exposes himself to the manifest danger of swearing falsely. The affections of the heart may be grievously criminal. When the eye has lighted on an object of temptation, if corrupt desire be cherished, vice already defiles the soul. When hatred rankles in the breast, and prompts to deeds of blood, the man is a murderer long before he has pointed the dagger to a brother's breast. Mortal sin is oftentimes committed in things which to the world's eye seem trivial. A neglect of positive duty towards those of one's household, is a virtual denial of the faith, which makes the Christian professor

worse than an infidel: an omission of the exercise of charity, in circumstances when it is imperative, subjects us to a sentence of eternal condemnation: a feeling of envy may make us associates as well as imitators of the fallen angel.

Venial sin is, as we have said, a slight transgression of the divine law. God forbid, however, that we should view lightly whatever is in any way opposed to the law of God! What faith teaches us is, that in the actual order of things there are some offences, which, according to the decrees which God has made, are not punishable with eternal torments. If a slight feeling of anger is cherished without any disposition to revenge, or any expression of contempt, it does not subject us to hell fire. If a hasty word escape our lips, not calculated to wound deeply the feelings of our neighbour, the offence of God is not to be pronounced deadly, although even an idle word is a subject of scrutiny at the last day. The occasional wanderings of the mind in prayer, when diligence is not used to recall it to God; the murmurings of the heart under the severe visitations of providence, without any rebellion against his will; the slight impatience so often witnessed on the bed of sickness, are imperfections and venial sins not punishable with eternal death.

We are forced to admit this distinction of sins, not only because reason shudders at the idea of eternal torments inflicted for a puerile disobedience, a thoughtless word, an inadvertent glance; but because so we have learned from our Christian ancestors, who, as far back as the days of St. Augustine and St. Cyprian, acknowledged their daily sins, and understood of them the petition which even the just daily pronounce: "forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." Besides the Scrip-

tures denounce wo to sinners guilty of certain vices: "Wo to the man by whom scandal cometh." They declare that they who commit certain crimes shall not possess the kingdom of God. They threaten some with the worm that never dies, and with the fire that is never extinguished. Other sins are in danger of a punishment less than hell fire: idle words must be accounted for, but are not denounced in terms so alarming: and offences, surely not of a grievous character, are ascribed to all men. Shall we say of the Apostles that they in many things offended mortally? Shall we say that each of them daily broke the commandments of God in thought, word, and deed, and that each offence deserved eternal death? How, then, could St. Paul say: "I am not conscious to myself of any thing?"* The natural consequence of the denial of the distinction of sins is, that all sins being considered deadly, and each man being persuaded that he cannot avoid falling into some sins daily, he may yield, as if through unavoidable necessity, and rely on faith for the covering of his sins.

The Catholic doctrine, on the contrary, stimulates to great purity of life. Although venial sin is easily committed through partial inadvertence, surprise, and frailty, yet no one is under any necessity of committing the slightest venial sin. If the just man fall often into slight transgressions, it is for want of due vigilance and earnest prayer. The sins of the tongue are those into which we are most easily betrayed: "If any man," says St. James, "offend not in word the same is a perfect man."† Yet if with David, we pray that God may place a watch before our

* 1 Cor. iv. 4. Newland ventures to write: "Paul and Barnabas parted in anger about a trifle." Analysis. art. xv. p. 205.

† James, iii. 2.

mouth, and a door round about our lips that we may not sin with our lips, divine grace will not be denied us. To excite vigilance we are reminded that "he that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little."* The fear of mortal sin is calculated to prevent the habitual indulgence of any venial attachment. We shall not utter an untruth in jest, lest it lead to a serious lie: we shall not wound charity by a harsh word, lest it betray us into grievous insult: we shall not take the smallest trifle belonging to our neighbour, lest it lead to great wrong.

Bishop M'Ilvaine treats lightly the various means indicated by our divines whereby venial sin may be pardoned: but he should know that little importance is attached by us to the external means, unless as serving to excite internal and corresponding dispositions. The use of holy water may avail to such as say in the penitential spirit of the Psalmist: "Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop and I shall be cleansed: thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow."† The striking of the breast, if accompanied by compunction like that of the publican, can cancel these slighter faults, nay, can serve to justification, before the actual reception of the Sacrament of Penance. The confession of sins made at the beginning of Mass, or in private devotions by the faithful, who humbly acknowledge, before God and his heavenly court‡ that they have sinned through their own fault, may propitiate God, without a sacramental confession of these slighter offences. The absolution given immediately before Communion by the Priest to the communicants in general, may

* Eccl. xix. 1. † Ps. l.

‡ "It is in an address to Almighty God in his heavenly court,"—Tract No. 75.

avail to the remission of the faults which might oppose the full influence of the divine Eucharist: and in many other ways God may bestow on his repentant children pardon of these slight offences: nor will any one mock the simplicity of the means, who considers the reproach addressed to the Syrian general for scorning to bathe in the waters of Jordan; or who reflects that the power of God is displayed in favor of the humble. When Bishop M'Ilvaine represents St. Thomas as saying: "One deed of charity can blot out all venial sins even without the least thought about them;"* he mistakes for a charitable deed, the act of charity, which is an interior exercise of divine love, the embracing of God with the affections of the soul. This, certainly, "may efface all venial sins, without the actual thought of them," because in the sincere love of God, particularly when ardent, is implied the detestation of all that displeases him. Bishop M'Ilvaine must be little acquainted with the language of our theologians, to have rendered as he has done the words which he cites as of St. Thomas: "Unus actus charitatis potest delere omnia venialia sine actuali cogitatione eorum." As he has not favoured us with a reference, I am unable to verify the quotation; but several passages of the writings of this illustrious schoolman present his views in a clear manner. Treating of the Eucharist, he says that it remits venial sins, inasmuch as "not only habitual charity, but its act is excited in this Sacrament, and by this act venial sins are remitted." "Charity," he repeats "by its act takes away venial sins."† Speaking elsewhere of the remission of venial sins, he says: "a certain virtual displeasure for having committed them is

* Oxford Divinity, p. 257. Note.

† 3 par. qu. lxxix. art iv. *Resp.* et *ad tertium.*

necessary, as for instance when any one is moved towards God and things divine with the affection of his heart, so that whatever might present itself to delay this motion would cause him displeasure, and he would grieve for having committed these sins although he would not actually think thereof."* "The fervor of charity virtually implies displeasure at venial sins."† In another passage quoted by Bishop M'Ilvaine, St. Thomas says that the various devout usages which he specifies serve for the remission of venial sin "when performed with reverence for God," and elsewhere he further explains his meaning, "inasmuch as they incline the soul to penance,"‡ and excite charity.§

Newland represents us as holding that venial sins "are of so trifling a nature, that they may be expiated by some temporal infliction."‖ We do not consider them trifling unless compared with the enormity of mortal sin. No temporal infliction expiates them, independently of the great atonement of the Cross; but to the penitent pardon of them is granted on easier conditions than accompany the remission of mortal sin. It is wrong to apply to these slighter sins, as Newland does, the curse pronounced in the Mosaic law against "every one that abideth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them:"¶ for "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law."** "We are not under the law, but under grace," and our offences are to be estimated by their intrinsic deformity, and opposition to the divine maxims of the Gospel. "The wages of sin

* 3 par. qr. lxxxvii. art. 1. *Resp.* † Ibidem *ad tertium.*
‡ Ibidem art. iii. *ad primum.* § Ibidem, *ad tertium.*
‖ Analysis, p. 208. ¶ Gal. iii. 10. ** Ibidem, 13.

is death"* according to the teaching of the Apostle, who, however, speaks of grievous sins,—of things whereof the converted christians were ashamed.† It is a perversion of Holy Writ to argue thence that the slightest act of impatience is punishable with eternal death. With similar disregard of the obvious meaning of the inspired writer, the words of St. James are objected: "whosoever shall keep the whole law, but offend in one *point*, is become guilty of all."‡ The Apostle is speaking of grievous crimes, not of imperfections or light sins, as is evident from the reason he assigns: "For he that said, Thou shalt not commit adultery, said also, Thou shalt not kill. Now if thou do not commit adultery, but shalt kill: thou art become a transgressor of the law" The inference of Newland from the passages above quoted is, "that all opposition to the commands of God, is worthy of death." We need only say in reply, that what are termed venial sins are rather deviations from the strict command, than acts in opposition to it, or that the opposition does not regard the main object of the command, and is not contemplated by the texts which are objected. The distinction, then, of venial sins from mortal, which is conformable to reason, and to the teaching of the primitive Church, remains unshaken. The justified man may fall into various slight offences, which render him less pleasing to God, without incurring the divine wrath, which is provoked by mortal sin. Moses, although he sinned in the mode of performing the miracle of drawing waters from the rock, was still the servant of God, but his fault was visited by the denial of entrance into the promised land.

* Rom. vi. 23. † Ibidem 21. ‡ James ii. 10.

CHAPTER XVI

INDULGENCES.

Nothing is less understood, or more misrepresented, than the Catholic doctrine on Indulgences. The rise of the Novatian heresy, in the early part of the third century, led the Church to adopt fixed rules of penitential discipline, that whilst resisting the excessive severity which denied pardon to the fallen, she might not relax morals by granting forgiveness on too easy conditions. The penitential works, which before that time had been undertaken by private zeal, or prescribed by the authority of individual prelates, were thenceforth enjoined by general law, and the period of their performance determined, according to the variety of sins. For seven, ten, fourteen years, and sometimes until the extremity of life, penitents were engaged in their course of public penance, after the termination of which they were restored to the privileges of Christian communion. It was, however, deemed expedient to empower the bishops to diminish the time, as the fervor or weakness of the penitent might demand, and to restore him by Indulgence to the communion of the Church. "A power," says Newland, "was given to all bishops by the Council of Nice, to shorten the time, and to relax the severity of those canons. The favor thus granted was called *Indulgence*."*

* Analysis of Burnet on Article xiv. p. 198.

Besides the Council of Nice,* the Councils of Ancyra,† Laodicea,‡ and Carthage§ sanctioned this usage. This favor was granted not only in regard to the disposition of the penitents themselves, but sometimes in consideration of the personal merit of those who became intercessors in their behalf. To such as had made an intrepid confession of the faith before the public tribunals in times of persecution, the honorable title of *Confessors* was given; whilst others, who had suffered torments on account of the faith, were called *Martyrs*, even although they survived the trial. These martyrs and confessors were justly dear to the Church; they were loved and honored for their glorious confession; and accordingly their intercession was all-powerful in obtaining a mitigation of penance for their weaker brethren. Already in the days of Tertullian, at the close of the second century, sinners "were wont to implore peace from the martyrs in prison."‖ The frequency of their petitions soon, however, degenerated into an abuse, against which the vigorous pen of St. Cyprian was employed. Whilst he condemned the facility with which these privileges were sometimes exercised in favor of apostates, who had given no proofs of their compunction for crimes so enormous, he admitted that in cases of death they should hold good. "When," he says, "some of those who had fallen, (*in persecution*,) either of themselves, or at the instigation of others, boldly demanded and attempted by violence to enjoy the peace promised them by the martyrs and confessors, I wrote twice to the clergy on this subject, and ordered them, that if any should depart out of life, after having received a letter from the

* Can. xii. † Can. v. ‡ Can. ii. § Cap. lxxv.
‖ L. 1. ad Martyr. cap. 1.

martyrs, having previously made their confession, and received the imposition of hands unto penance, they should be sent to the Lord with the peace promised them by the martyrs."* This peace, then, not only implied the external communion of the Church whilst living, but a removal of that obligation of penance which remained after confession and absolution, and which prevented the vision of God. St. Cyprian, elsewhere speaking on the same subject, says: "We indeed believe that the merits of the martyrs and works of just men have great force with the Judge, but when the day of judgment shall come, when at the end of time and of the world, the Christian people shall stand before his tribunal."† This he says, condemning the facility which caused the entire neglect of penitential satisfaction on the part of apostates; but not denying the force of the merits of the martyrs in cases where there was a just cause for applying them, as when death summoned sinners to that dread tribunal, before they had done sufficient penance.

In mitigating the severity of canonical penance, the bishops used the power of loosing, which, equally as that of binding, had been given them in the persons of the Apostles; and in this they imitated the benign indulgence of St. Paul to the penitent Corinthian, pardoning in the person of Christ whatever needed pardon.‡ Their act was directed to the relaxation of the canonical law; but by consequence it removed the debt of temporal punish-

* Ep. xiv.

† L. de lapsis. "Credimus quidem posse apud judicem plurimum martyrum merita, et opera justorum."

‡ 2 Cor. ii. 10.

ment, to discharge which the canonical penance was enjoined. This was not a mere disciplinary regulation, intended only to terrify sinners, or to repair scandal; it was truly to appease God and to satisfy his justice. Cyprian, speaking of the penitential exercises to which the sinner should devote himself, says: "The Lord is to be implored, the Lord is to be appeased by our satisfaction."* Thus in granting the Indulgence, the bishops freed the sinner from this necessity of satisfaction, pardoning him by divine authority. Sometimes the pardon was only partial, a portion of the penance and satisfaction being remitted; sometimes it was entire, or *plenary*, the whole obligation of canonical penance being taken away. The partial Indulgences were designated according to the length of time abridged, forty days, seven years, or a longer period, as assigned to various sins in the penitential canons.

The remission of sin was not granted by an Indulgence, for it was always the fixed principle of the Church that this should be sacramental, and in the form of a sentence in the tribunal of penance. St. Basil had taught that "we must necessarily confess our sins to those to whom the mysteries of God are entrusted;"† and the practice of all preceding ages shows that this was a necessary consequence of the power of forgiving and retaining sins granted by Christ to his apostles.‡ The temporal punishment, which oftentimes remains to be endured after the forgive-

* "Dominus orandus est, Dominus nostra satisfactione placandus est." L. de lapsis.

† In Reg. brev. resp. ad qu. cclxxxviii.

‡ See Theologia Dogmatica, vol. iii. p. 338.

ness of sin, was alone remitted by an Indulgence, as it took the place of the performance of canonical penance.

The merits of Jesus Christ have always been regarded as the inexhaustible source whence all graces flow, and in virtue whereof all power is exercised. The bishops offered these to divine justice in satisfaction for the debt, from which, in the name of Christ, they released the sinner. Yet a motive for the exercise of the power being drawn from the sufferings of the martyrs, who at an early period interceded to obtain it, the Church deemed it no derogation to the merits of Christ, which she proclaims to be infinite, to offer at the same time, in behalf of her weak members, the sufferings and merits of the saints in conjunction with those of our Redeemer. This was done, not to supply any deficiency in the atonement of Calvary, but as a motive for its application. The merits of the saints take also the character of a partial ransom, deriving its value from the cross. The ardor of their love, their patience in suffering, their intense compunction, have received from divine munificence a reward exceedingly great: but God is not displeased when his Church places before him the severity of their penitential inflictions, and the intenseness of their sufferings for the faith, to supply the deficiencies of their weaker brethren. The stainless Mother, whose very soul a sword of sorrow pierced, may be presented, that her unmerited suffering may plead for our want of courage to endure what our sins deserve: the austerity of the Precursor, sanctified from his mother's womb, may supply our inability to mortify our appetite, as becomes penitents: the labors and sufferings of Paul, "in prisons, in stripes above measure, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness," may be offered in our behalf. We are members of one body,

and claim the benefits of the mysterious union, which makes all one in Christ.*

An essential condition required in whoever wishes to obtain an Indulgence is, that he be in the state of grace; for no one, not already justified, can obtain a release from the debt of temporal punishment, which supposes the guilt and eternal punishment remitted. Contrition and confession are expressed in all grants of Indulgences as necessary conditions, whereto is often joined the reception of the Holy Eucharist, the offering up of prayer in some particular church, for the wants of the universal Church, and the exercise of special acts of piety or charity. During some centuries, Indulgences were granted to those who contributed to the Crusades, to rescue their Christian brethren from Turkish oppression, or who aided in the erection of

* The Tract No. 79 thus explains an Indulgence:—"There is one other means of escaping the penalties due to sin in Purgatory, which may briefly be mentioned, viz: by the grant of indulgences; these are dispensed on the following theory. Granting that a certain fixed temporal penalty is attached to every act of sin, in such case, it would be conceivable, that, as the multitude of Christians did not discharge their total debt in this life, so some extraordinary holy men might more than discharge it. Such are the Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, Ascetics, and the like, who have committed few sins, and have undergone extreme labours and sufferings, voluntary and involuntary. This being supposed, the question rises, what becomes of the overplus; and then there seems a fitness that what is not needed for themselves, should avail for the brethren who are still debtors. It is accordingly stored together with Christ's merits, in a kind of treasure-house, to be dispensed according to the occasion, and that at the discretion of the Church. The application of this treasure is called an Indulgence, which stands instead of a certain time of penance in this life, or for the period, whatever it be, to which that time is commuted in Purgatory."

churches, and in other public necessities of the Church. Such offerings, made from motives of charity and religion, were, doubtless, just matter for granting Indulgences, although—in common with most other things—liable to many abuses, which eventually led to their entire abandonment.

Although the controversy about Indulgences was the main spring of the revolution produced by Luther, the doctrine of the Church on this subject was one of the last treated of in the Council of Trent, and the decree was couched in terms of great reserve and moderation. "Since the power of granting Indulgences has been given by Christ to the Church, and from the earliest period she has used this power, divinely given her, the Holy Synod teaches and orders that the use of Indulgences, which is very salutary to the Christian people, and is approved of by the authority of holy councils, should be retained; and she condemns with anathema those who either assert that they are useless, or who deny that the power of granting them resides in the Church."* At the same time, measures were adopted to remedy abuses, and all just objection was thereby taken away. Mr. Newman, in his effort to reconcile the English Articles with Catholic faith, contends that the XXII. Article rejecting pardons, regards the abuse of the power, rather than the power itself. "The pardons" he says, "spoken of in the Article, are large and reckless indulgences from the penalties of sin obtained on money payments."†

The power of granting Indulgences is manifestly deduced from the promise of Christ to Peter to give him the keys of his kingdom, with authority to bind and loose: "I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.

* Sess. xxv. decr. de indulgentiis. † Tract No. 90, 1st edit.

And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven."* The keys of a kingdom are the known Scriptural emblem of the highest authority under the Sovereign,† and the power of loosing and binding must consequently be commensurate therewith, and imply general authority. The bonds of sin are loosed in the Sacrament of Penance; but as a temporal punishment often remains after the remission of the guilt, there can be no doubt that the sinner may be released from the punishment for just causes, by the judgment and act of him whose acts Christ has promised to ratify. The same is to be said proportionably of the acts of all the Apostles, and of their successors: but as order is essential to the Church, the exercise of the episcopal power must be subject to those restrictions which General Councils or the Vicegerent of Christ has established. The salutary influence of Indulgences is manifest, since the faithful are moved thereby to the frequent and devout reception of the Sacraments, to prayer, to works of charity and zeal, and to the exercise of every Christian virtue. The complaint of Jeremy Taylor and others, that a relaxation of ecclesiastical discipline must ensue from the grant of Indulgences, comes with a bad grace from those who have utterly set aside all the penitential canons, and who deny altogether the necessity of works of penance. The assertion that it foments sin, betrays entire ignorance of its nature and its influence. The prospect of pardon to the penitent sinner, at whatsoever time he may return to duty, may be abused;

* Matt. xvi. 19.

‡ See Bloomfield *in locum:* also my treatise on "the Primacy of the Apostolic See," p. 22.

and yet God has not judged fit to withhold it. Shall the Church be thought to encourage sin, when she offers certain spiritual supplies on the express condition, that none but the contrite of heart can enjoy them?

An Indulgence remits no sin: much less is it—as often has been alleged—a pardon for sins past, present, and to come. When an Indulgence is granted, which may be received at the hour of death, on invoking the saving name of Jesus, or submitting to death as a punishment from God, no anticipated pardon is given of the sins which may in the mean time be committed: but in the hope of the pious disposition of the soul at that awful crisis, a succour is offered to his weakness, on condition of an act suited to his situation, and of his sincere repentance for all past transgressions. Hence Urban II., in the Council of Clermont, in the year 1095, qualified the Indulgences offered to the Crusaders to be obtained in death, by limiting them to such as should depart truly penitent.* The abandonment of sin, with true sorrow of heart for having committed it, is, in all cases, an indispensable condition for obtaining an Indulgence, which consequently strikes at the very root of sin, whilst it otherwise encourages the exercise of good works of every kind.

The Protestant theory of plenary justification by faith gives the assurance of entire forgiveness, the moment the individual is fully persuaded that the justice of Christ is imputed to him: Catholic faith admits such plenary remission in Baptism, when received with faith and compunction: but it teaches that the same abundant pardon is not ordinarily granted to the baptized penitent. The guilt and eternal punishment are taken away in the Sacrament

* "Qui in vera poenitentia decesserint."

of Penance : the temporal punishment, if not satisfied for, or endured, may be released by indulgences, granted to true penitents on condition of the performance of special good works. It requires little discrimination to judge which system presents greater facilities of pardon, and greater incentives to sin : that which says : Believe, and you are at once entirely freed from sin ; or this which tells us : Repent, do penance, and labor to atone for your transgressions ; while at the same time it offers the merits of Jesus Christ, and those of his devoted servants, to supply our deficiency.

CHAPTER XVII.

PURGATORY.

The Catholic belief of Purgatory is confined to the existence of a state of purgation antecedent to the day of Judgment, wherein imperfect souls, not defiled with mortal sin, are detained until God is pleased to admit them into his glory. Luther in the dispute at Leipzic said: "Since I believe firmly, yea, I venture to say, I know that there is a Purgatory, I am easily persuaded that mention is made of it in Scripture." Afterwards, however, he denied it. Some Protestant writers of great celebrity have renewed the error of Vigilantius, and maintained that the saints are not received into heaven until the general Judgment, and that in the mean time they are in a state of repose, awaiting their beatitude. This is equivalent to a general Purgatory for all, since Catholic faith does not oblige us to admit any positive punishment or suffering, but the temporary privation of the Divine vision, which is to be imparted to all the saints after the day of Judgment. The words of the Council of Trent are that "there is a Purgatory, and that the souls there detained are aided by the suffrages of the living, and especially by the acceptable sacrifice of the Altar."* Detention is itself a punishment, and verifies the words of the canon, wherein mention is

* Sess. xxv. Decr. de Purg.

made of a debt of temporal punishment to be discharged in Purgatory.* The difference between us and the Protestant divines of whom we have spoken, regards rather the lot of the saints, whom we believe, when perfect, to pass immediately to bliss, while imperfect souls are detained in that middle state. Universalists have rendered this Protestant Purgatory still more general, by admitting the worst sinners to happiness, after a temporary detention in suffering. The Oxford divines have availed themselves of the opinion above referred to, in order to recommend their sentiments in regard to the remission of sin after Baptism, without seeming to adopt the Catholic faith. "Who can tell," writes Mr. Newman, "but in God's mercy, the time of waiting between death and Christ's coming, may be profitable to those who have been his true servants here, as a time of maturing that fruit of grace, but partly formed in them in this life, a school time of contemplation, as this world is of discipline, of active service. Such surely is the force of the Apostle's words, that He that hath begun a good work in you, will perform it, until the day of Christ—not stopping at death, but carrying it into the Resurrection—as if the interval between death and His coming, was by no means to be omitted in the process of our preparation for heaven."† The Tract No. 79 says in regard to the doctrine of the Council of Trent, "taken in the mere letter there is little in it against which we shall be able to sustain formal objections." "The Roman Church holds that the great majority of Christians die in God's favour, yet more or less under the bond of their sins. And so far we may unhesitatingly allow to them, or

* Sess. vi. Can. xxx. de Justificat.

† Parochial Sermons, pp. 411, 412.

rather we ourselves hold the same, if we hold that after Baptism, there is no plenary pardon of sins in this life to the sinner, however penitent, such as in Baptism was once vouchsafed to him."* Mr. Newman has subsequently endeavoured to reconcile this sentiment with the Articles of the Church of England, and says that the doctrine concerning Purgatory which they condemn is "that the punishment of unrighteous Christians is temporary not eternal, and that the purification of the righteous is a portion of the same punishment, together with the superstitions, and impostures for the sake of gain consequent thereupon."†

The Catholic belief on this point, as on all others, is immediately derived from the constant tradition of the Church, whereof an authentic evidence is found in the ancient and Apostolic practice of offering prayers for the departed.‡ It is supported by several passages of the Old and New Testament; as, for instance, by the fact recorded in the second book of Macchabees, wherein we learn that Judas Macchabeus had sacrifice offered in the temple of Jerusalem for the soldiers who had fallen in battle;§ and by the testimony of the Apostle that some shall be saved yet so as by fire,‖ suffering some loss, and enduring some affliction. Two classes of imperfect souls are believed to be detained in Purgatory; those who have not fully satisfied for the temporal punishment due to mortal sin, after its forgiveness, and those who have not previously to death obtained pardon of venial sin. We do not hold, as the Tractarians seem to maintain, that there is no plenary pardon for sin committed after Baptism until the day of

* Tract 79. † Tract 90, § 6, p. 28. ‡ Tract 79.
§ 2 Mach. xii. 40. ‖ 1 Cor. iii. 15.

Judgment.* We believe that, this plenary pardon is not generally granted immediately on repentance, because sorrow is seldom perfect, and the Divine Wisdom and Justice require a temporal satisfaction to restrain the penitent, and make him mindful of the grievousness of sin. The martyr by his death obtains full remission, on account of the ardor of charity, and the union of his individual sacrifice with the great victim of salvation: the penitent may attain to the same happiness by tears, and prayers, and works of penance, inspired by contrition: but the tepid Christian, who neglects to manifest and increase compunction by such acts, cannot reasonably be supposed to obtain the same abundant forgiveness. Therefore it is that the Divine Justice detains him for a time from the enjoyment of God, and makes him feel the weight of his transgressions. St. Cyprian, extolling the happiness of the martyrs, who immediately after death pass to the vision of God, whilst most Christians need purification by suffering for sins which they had not sufficiently atoned for, says: "To await pardon is different from attaining at once to glory: to be put into prison, and not be liberated therefrom, unless the last farthing is paid, is different from receiving immediately the reward due to ardent virtue and faith: to be tormented with a long continuing pain for sins, to be cleansed and purified by fire a long time is different from expiating all one's sins by martyrdom."† This saint, with the African Fathers generally, speaks of

* Macknight denies that there is any justification in this life, and explains all the Scriptural texts of justification at the second coming of Christ. Essay vi. on Justification, § v. This, however, is in manifest opposition to the obvious meaning of so many passages wherein it is spoken of as a past action. See Tract No. 67. p. 129.

† Ep. liii. ad Anton.

positive punishment as inflicted on imperfect souls in that state of detention, a sentiment, which though not of faith, has always widely prevailed in the Church. The Oxford divines admit that it "is found from an early age in the African Church."*

The other class of imperfect souls, whom we believe to be detained from the vision of God, is formed of such as die guilty of venial sin, unrepented of and unforgiven. The facility wherewith even just men fall into venial sin, the suddenness of death, in numberless cases, and the imperfection of the dispositions of many, who are aware of its approach, leave no doubt that many die without detesting venial sin, and obtaining its pardon. To suppose it remitted without any sorrow, or other preparation of mind, is inconsistent with the general economy of God in the remission of sin; and to say, with the Bishop of Exeter, that the sin "which we may deem the least will be deadly enough, if unrepented, to work our perdition," is opposed to our sense of divine mercy. When the servant of God has departed from this life with faith, hope and love, conscious to himself of no grievous prevarication; and yet in an imperfect state, because he listened to the whisperings of vanity and self-love, or clung with too much fondness to life, or loved in death with too great tenderness the wife of his bosom, or indulged too anxious a solicitude for the future condition of his loved children,—we cannot persuade ourselves that these imperfections and venial offences when unrepented of, work his perdition: nor can we hope that a soul thus clinging to earthly objects shall at once be admitted to the embrace of divine purity, equally as the seraphic lover, who, detached from every thing of earth, longs to be dissolved, and be with Christ.

* Tract 79.

The imperfection of human works is acknowledged by all. Who is there that has not felt the titillations of vanity? Who is it that has not listened to the whisperings of pride? Who has uniformly rejected the suggestions of ambition? I speak of that light tincture of these vices which takes from virtuous actions their perfect beauty, and dims their lustre, without, however, destroying their character of good works. The divine glory is sought by works of zeal; but with this holy feeling is insensibly intermingled a regard for our own honor, which we find promoted by our exertions. Charity is sincerely exercised towards the distressed, for the pure love of Him who bade us love each other: yet when it receives public commendation, we too often indulge some slight complacency, which, undoubtedly, detracts somewhat from the fulness of the reward we otherwise would receive. With a view to honor God and secure our salvation, we attend the public exercises of religious worship: yet perhaps in the most solemn moment, the thought of the high opinion of our piety formed by the bystanders gratifies us. These imperfections and sins detract much from the excellence of virtue: and as God is to judge all men according to their works, it is reasonable to suppose that some punishment, at least the temporary privation of happiness, must await those who have sinned in the many ways in which frail man offends. The imperfect cannot expect the same reward as their more perfect brethren, who with purer zeal and more perfect love, have sought the glory of the God of hosts. His eye discerns the motives of human action, and he sounds all the depths of the human heart, and he purifies by chastisement the child whom he prepares for glory.

Moses, the faithful servant of God, the chosen Mediator through whom the Law was given, the wonder-worker and

the prophet, hesitated in the performance of a miracle. When striking the rock from which issued water to refresh the Israelites, he did not glorify God by that unbounded confidence which became him: yet there is no reason to suppose that he sinned mortally. Nevertheless he was denied entrance into the land of promise, and only from the summit of Nebo, beyond the banks of Jordan, was he allowed to view it. Souls freed from the prison of the body, naturally tend to God their author, and long for the promised inheritance; but Divine Justice withholds them until their imperfections and sins are cancelled.

The Apostle St. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, severely rebukes them for certain partialities which tended to division and schism. He reminds them that the ministers of Religion are all engaged in the work of God: "and every man shall receive his own reward according to his labour. For we are God's coadjutors, you are God's husbandry, you are God's building. According to the grace of God that is given to me, as a wise architect, I have laid the foundation: and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation no man can lay, but that which is laid; which is Christ Jesus. Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble: every man's work shall be manifest: for the day of the Lord shall declare it, because it shall be revealed in fire: and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is. If any man's work abide, which he hath built thereupon: he shall receive a reward. If any man's work burn, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire. Know you not that you are the temple of God?"* According to this image of a building—a temple

* 1 Cor. iii. 8.

—erected on a solid foundation, the workmen who build on it stones of great value, adorn it with gold and silver, will receive a great reward, when tried by fire it shall resist the flame. Men, endued with apostolic zeal, preaching the solid doctrines of faith, and labouring to form the faithful to the exercise of every virtue, receive from God a great recompense for their labors. They who are influenced by a zeal less pure and enlightened, and who, though retaining the foundation, by announcing the true doctrine of Christ, nevertheless study their own glory, and indulge personal rivalry, are like builders, who raise lowly cottages, or huts, of wood, hay and stubble, which cannot resist the fire. It is much if the builder, or occupant, escape with the loss of all he possesses, and of the building. The same may be applied to the faithful individually. Works of ardent charity and devoted piety are like the gold and silver ornaments of a building formed of the solid and precious stones of Christian virtue, and will receive an abundant reward from God. Those who, retaining the faith, and practising the substance of virtue, freely commit venial offences, erect a building which cannot stand the searching flame of God's Judgment. They may be saved, but at great risk, and with great loss, and as it were escaping from a building in flames.

There is no rational mode of accounting for the apostolic custom of praying for the dead, unless the belief that many are in a state in which they can be relieved by the suffrages of the faithful. The custom is proved by all the ancient Liturgies, by the testimonies of Tertullian, Cyprian, Cyril of Jerusalem, Chrysostom, Augustine, and the Fathers generally, several of whom expressly refer its

origin to the Apostles.* It is admitted and recommended by several distinguished prelates of the Church of England, among others by Bishop Forbes, who writes: "let not the ancient practice of praying, and making oblations for the dead, be any more rejected by Protestants as unlawful. It is a practice received throughout the universal Church of Christ, which did ever believe it both pious and charitable. Many of the Fathers were of opinion, that some light sins, not remitted in this life were forgiven after death, by the intercession of the Church in her public prayers, and especially those which were offered up in the celebration of the tremendous mysteries; and it is no absurdity to believe so. The practise of praying for the dead is derived, as Chrysostom asserts, from the Apostles."† Calvin himself did not venture to deny that the practice existed at least thirteen hundred years before his day, and that it was conformable to an instinct of nature prompting us to express before God our affection and good wishes for the dead.‡ The Oxford divines admit "the universal and apparently apostolical custom of praying for the dead in Christ,"§ and ask a minister who objected to it whether he has not experienced an instinctive impulse to pray for them; "I would venture to ask any clergyman, I would even appeal to yourself, if a Parochial minister, whether, when you have heard of the death of one of your flock, of whom you hoped well, your first impulse has not been to pray to

* See Theologia Dogmatica, Vol. iv. p. 259.

† Bishop Forbes on Purgatory.

‡ Inst. l. iii. c. v. §. 10. "Solatium quærebant, quo sublevarent suum mœrorem: et inhumanum videbatur non edere coram Deo aliquod suæ erga mortuos dilectionis testimonium. Ad hunc affectum quam sit propensum hominis ingenium omnes experiuntur."

§ Tract, No. 79.

God to make up to the departed whatever had been deficient in your ministrations? whether (as Luther did) you have not prayed for the perfecting and increased blessedness of a departed friend or relation, even though you have subsequently checked yourself? whether you did not find a comfort from that prayer? and whether the dictate of human nature, warranted as it is by the early Church, may not, after all, be implanted by the God of nature—may not be the voice of God within us."*

The connexion of prayer for the dead with the belief of an intermediate state, in which souls are detained for a time from the beatific vision of God, is obvious: for it would be useless to pray for those who enjoy the delights of the divine presence; and to pray for the damned is useless, and inconsistent with the acknowledged principle of Christian faith, that their doom is fixed and eternal. When, then, the Church in her Liturgy asks of God to give to all that have slept in Christ a place of refreshment, light, and peace,† she supposes that many are in affliction, darkness, and misery. When she implores for them eternal rest, she indicates that as yet they have not attained to the repose of the saints in the kingdom of God. Hence St. Cyril of Jerusalem, explaining the Liturgy, says: "We pray in fine for all who have departed from life, since we believe that the greatest advantage accrues to souls for whom the supplication is offered of the holy and tremendous sacrifice, which is placed on the altar."‡

Leibnitz says: "it is a most ancient belief of the Church, that we are to pray for the dead, and that the dead are assisted by our prayers; and that those who have

* Tract, No. 77. † Roman Missal, Canon of Mass.
‡ Cat. Myst. v.

departed this life, although through Christ, being received by God into mercy, and the eternal punishment remitted, still, notwithstanding, continue to undergo a certain paternal chastisement, and purgation for their sins, especially if they have not sufficiently washed away their stains during life. To this some have applied the words of Christ with regard to 'paying the last farthing,' and that 'all flesh shall be cleansed by fire;' others, the passage of St. Paul concerning those 'who have built upon this foundation wood, hay, and stubble,' and 'shall be saved, so as by fire;' and others, again, the passage on Baptism for the dead."* The allegation of Newland and others, that prayers were indiscriminately offered for the saints, as well as for the faithful in general is untrue; for a marked distinction is made in the Liturgies and in the writings of the Fathers, between those who are commemorated with honor, and whose prayers are sought, and others for whose repose and happiness we pray. "The discipline of the Church," St. Augustine observes, "is well known to the faithful, the martyrs being commemorated at the altar of God in such a way that prayer is not offered up for them, but is offered up for other departed souls: for it were an insult to pray for a martyr, to whose prayers we should be recommended."† Those who have confounded these things have availed themselves of some verbal similarity, where the context plainly marked the distinction. The Church has always honored the memory of her illustrious children, and presented her suffrages for the imperfect, being instructed by the Apostles, as well as by the inspired author of the book of Macchabees, that "it is a holy and whole-

* Systema Theologicum, p. 348.

† Serm. clix. n. 1. alias Serm. xvii. de verbis Apostoli.

some thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins."*

The practice of prayer for the departed, and consequently the belief of a state wherein they may need prayer, and may benefit by it, is common to the Greeks† and Latins: who agree in the doctrine of faith, although the sentiment of positive suffering by penal inflictions does not prevail among the former. Their harmony in the dogma is proved by the fact that no difficulty occurred on this point in the Council of Florence, where the union of both was effected. This is candidly admitted in the Tracts. Would to God that Protestants, instead of being horror stricken at the name of Purgatory, would dispassionately consider the limits of our doctrine on this subject, and embrace the practice of prayer for the dead, which even Newland, after Burnet, admits to be derived from venerable antiquity! "It may be objected," he says, "that we have departed from the practice of the primitive

* 2 Mach. xii. For the full vindication of the divine inspiration of the Books of Macchabees, see *Theologia Dogmatica*, Vol. i. pp. 375—400. Mr. Newman seems ready to admit the inspiration of all the books which Protestants usually term Apocryphal. After many citations from the Homilies, in which passages from Tobias, Wisdom, and Ecclesiasticus are quoted as of the Holy Ghost, he remarks:— "Thus we see the authority of the Fathers, of the six first Councils, and of the judgments of the Church generally, the holiness of the Primitive church, THE INSPIRATION OF THE APOCRYPHA, the sacramental character of Marriage, and other ordinances, the Real Presence in the Eucharists, the Church's power of excommunicating kings, the profitableness of fasting, the propitiatory virtue of good works, the Eucharistic commemoration, and justification by a righteousness within us are taught in the Homilies." ("By inherent righteousness" in first edition.) Tract No. 90, § ii. p. 76.

† Analysis, Art. xxii. p. 349.

Church in praying for the dead. WE DO NOT DENY IT." —"The only Scriptural proof is taken from 2 Tim. i. 18, where St. Paul prays that Onesimus may find mercy of the Lord in that day, but it is not certain that Onesimus was dead when this passage was written."* In the opinion of the Tractarians he was dead, and the context supports their sentiment. St. Paul prays that God may give mercy to his family on account of the many kind acts which he had performed towards the person of the Apostle, and then prays that he himself may find mercy. This separate mention of the family of Onesimus, and the eulogy of his virtues, manifestly suppose his death, especially when followed by a prayer that he may find mercy when at the bar of judgment. If then the Apostle prayed for a departed servant of God, the practice is useful and salutary. Some Anglican Divines have observed that the Apostles and our Lord himself must have sanctioned this practice by their presence, since it was a part of the public worship of the Jews in their day: and Jeremy Taylor admits that it surely must be harmless, since our Lord who was wont to rebuke the Pharisees for their vain observances, never reproached them with praying for the dead. Its connexion with the belief of Purgatory is obvious from the fact, that the chief reason alledged by Protestants for rejecting it, is that it led to that belief, and, if revived, would open the way to its introduction anew into their communion.

* Analysis, Art. xxii. p. 349.

CHAPTER XVIII.

POSSIBILITY OF OBSERVING THE LAW.

NOTWITHSTANDING the many venial sins into which even the just fall, and which, if not repented of in life, are punished by detention in Purgatory, as we have explained in the preceding chapter, the just are truly said to satisfy the divine law, as far as our present state admits,* by such actions as are performed under the influence of grace, and in union with God. "For although in this mortal life," says the Council of Trent, "persons, however holy and just, sometimes fall, at least, into slight and daily sins, which are also styled venial, they do not on that account cease to be just: for the petition, 'forgive us our trespasses,' is the true and humble language of the just."† Lest however this general frailty should be a plea for wilful transgression, especially of a grievous kind, as if the observance of the commandments of God were impossible, the Council renewed the anathemas pronounced by ancient Councils against such as blaspheme God by asserting this impossibility. "No one," says the Council, "although justified, should think himself free from the observance of the commandments: no one should use the rash expression which has been forbidden by the Fathers under pain of anathema, that the commandments of God are impossible to be observed by the justified man. For God does

* Conc. Trid. Sess. vi. cap. xvi. de justif. † Ibidem, cap. xi.

not command impossibilities, but by ordering us admonishes us to do what is in our power, and to ask of Him what is beyond our strength, and He aids us in order to accomplish it."* Calvin assailed the doctrine of Trent,† and maintained that "none of us is able to keep the commandments."‡ Jansenius subsequently asserted that "some of the Divine commandments are impossible to be observed even by a just man, although willing, and endeavouring to observe them, and that grace, whereby they might become possible, is denied him."§ The condemnation of this assertion by the Sovereign Pontiffs is said by Newland, after Burnet, to imply the entire perfection of human works,‖ which no Pontiff or Council has ever maintained. In the Larger Catechism of the Presbyterians the error of Calvin and Jansenius is plainly avowed: "No man is able, either of himself, or of any grace received in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God; but doth daily break them in thought, word and deed."¶ The qualification of the observance by the term "perfectly," might, at first, appear intended to indicate the venial imperfections which are found in human works; but it is subsequently asserted that every sin, even the least, deserveth God's wrath and curse, both in this life, and that which is to come.**

God could not consistently with his justice give to his creature a commandment which it is impossible to fulfil. This truth is so obvious to reason, independently of revelation, that it would never have been questioned, had not

* Conc. Trid. Sess. vi. cap. xi. de justif.

† In antidoto Conc. Trid. ‡ Inst. l. iii, c. xviii. 9.

§ In opere dicto: 'Augustinus;' L. iii. de gratia c. xiii.

‖ Analysis, Art. xii. p. 182. Note.

¶ Larger Catechism, qu. 149. ** Ibidem, qu. 152.

men judged from the experience of their passions, rather than from unbiassed reflection. They found their passions uncontrollable: they imagined themselves to be just men and sincerely desirous of observing the divine law: and hence they concluded that sufficient grace to restrain entirely the rebellious appetites of corrupt nature is not given, even to the just. They sought for the cause in the corruption of nature by original sin; and thought they had sufficiently vindicated the divine attributes, by considering the supposed impossibility as its just punishment. The Council of Trent contemplating the riches of divine grace bestowed through Jesus Christ our Lord, recognizes in the justified man, acting under the influence of grace, strength and capacity to perform all that God commands. The contrary error makes void the mystery of Redemption. If God, consistently with his attributes, cannot in any circumstances require what is in itself impossible; neither can He, consistently with his merciful decree to save mankind by the victim of Calvary, withhold from the justified man who humbly and earnestly implores it, the grace purchased at so great a price, whereby strength and power are given to fulfil the condition of entrance into life, by keeping the commandments.

Of the ancient ceremonial law it is said that it was a yoke which could not be borne: wherefore Peter reproved the Jewish converts who unnecessarily sought to subject the Gentile converts to these observances: "Why tempt you God, to put a yoke upon the necks of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?"* But not even that law was impossible to be observed. The multitude of the rites exposed the Jews to frequent

* Acts xv. 10.

transgressions, which, however, by diligence could be avoided, with the aid of divine grace. The Apostle St. Paul adverting to the facility of transgression, and to the well known fact, that transgressions were multiplied, states as the end of the law what had been its result, (by a familiar Hebrew turn of speech,) and observes that the increase of sin had served for a greater display of grace. "Now the law entered in, that sin might abound. And where sin abounded, grace did more abound."* The fact of general guilt in violating the law is distinctly stated in the epistle to the Galatians: "for as many as are of the works of the law, are under a curse. For it is written: Cursed is every one, that abideth not in all things, which are written in the book of the law to do them."† Yet this must necessarily be limited to such as did not with a spirit of faith seek from God the grace necessary to comply with all the legal requisitions: for Zachary and Elizabeth "were both just before God, walking in all the commandments and justifications of the Lord without blame."‡ David declares to God: "I have run the way of thy commandments, when thou didst enlarge my heart."§

The moral law, together with the ceremonial and judicial, constituted the whole Mosaic code. It surely could never have been absolutely impossible to be observed: otherwise the adulterer, the thief, the assassin, the perjurer could plead in self justification the natural necessity of which they were victims. When St. Paul states the consequences of the law, the bad passions which seemed excited and inflamed by the prohibitions of indulgence, he evidently indicates no necessary result or natural necessity,

* Rom. v. 20.
† Gal. iii. 10.
‡ Luke i. 6.
§ Ps. cxviii. 32.

but consequences, whereof an occasion arose from the clear language of the prohibition: "I did not know sin, but by the law: for I had not known concupiscence, if the law did not say: 'Thou shalt not covet.' But sin taking occasion by the commandment wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead."* The sinfulness of vicious desires might not be clearly understood, especially in the early period of the use of reason, had not the law forbidden to covet: and the desires might have been less frequent and less violent, had not the prohibition given occasion to the manifestation of corrupt propensity. Yet the law was not chargeable with these results, since in itself "the law indeed is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good;"† and the direct tendency of the law is to restrain the passions: but a higher principle must come to its aid, "the grace of God by Jesus Christ our Lord;"‡ a principle whose influence was enjoyed by the just under the ancient dispensation, who looked forward with hope to the Messiah.

Whoever asserts that the moral law is impossible, offers a plea for every vice; and the believer, who imagines he has seized on the righteousness of Christ, when buffeted by passion, may yield, persuaded that "no man is able either of himself, or of any grace received in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God; but doth daily break them in thought, word, and deed."§ The answer of God to Paul: "My grace is sufficient for thee, for power is made perfect in infirmity,"‖ has no meaning for one who is persuaded, that it is impossible to keep the

* Rom. vii. 7. † Ibidem 12. ‡ Ibidem 25.

§ Larger Catechism of Presbyterians, II. 149.

‖ 2 Cor. xii. 9.

divine commandment: "Thou shalt not covet." Thus such a man may flatter himself that impure excesses are among the unavoidable weaknesses to which even just men are subject, and that in this respect no man is able, by any grace received in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God! In fact, the Synod of Dort did not blush to declare that the grace of adoption remains, amidst the greatest falls, like those of Peter and David.* We thank God that the ancient councils of the Church have defined principles of quite an opposite character; and with the fathers of the second council of Orange, "According to Catholic faith we believe, that grace being received through Baptism, all baptized persons, with the aid and concurrence of Christ, are able and ought to fulfil the things that appertain to salvation, if they wish to labour faithfully."†

Under the Christian dispensation the abundance of gifts and grace which we have received, gives us facility and joy in observing the commandments. Hence our Redeemer invites us to take his yoke and burden upon us, assuring us that it is sweet and light: "Come to me, all you that labour, and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart: and you shall find rest for your souls: for my yoke is sweet and my burden light."‡ Would this be true were it impossible to observe his commandments? He makes this observance the condition of his friendship: "You are my friends, if you do the things that I command you."§ He warns us against ascribing to ourselves any praise, even when we are conscious of having

* Can. vi. See also Presbyterian Confession of Faith, ch. xi. v.
† Can. ult. ‡ Mat. xi. 29. § John xv. 14.

fulfilled all his commandments: "When you shall have done all these things that are commanded you, say: We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which we ought to do."* Grabe, an Anglican writer, justly observes: "By these words our Saviour most clearly teaches us that we can do the things which are commanded, and which we are bound to do: otherwise he would suppose an impossible condition, and would order us to utter a falsehood, saying: 'We have done what we ought to do.' God forbid that such a blasphemy should enter any one's mind."† Our Divine Master directed his Apostles to teach all nations to observe all things whatsoever they had heard from his lips,‡ the duties to be practised, as well as the truths to be believed. This is the gospel of salvation to be preached to every creatnre. How illusory such preaching must be, if not even the justified man, who by faith embraces the gospel, and earnestly seeks to practise the duties prescribed by it, can by any grace received in this life fulfil the commandments? Such was not the preaching of John, who, inculcating divine charity, required its manifestation and exercise in the observance of the divine commandments, which he declared are not difficult: "This is the charity of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not heavy."§ Such was not the preaching of Paul, who gave the faithful the assurance that God would not abandon them in the hour of trial, but would impart grace whereby they might issue forth unhurt from temptation. "Let no temptation take hold on you, but such as is human. And God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are

* Luke xvii. 10. † Ad cap. iii. § 3. Harmoniæ Apost. a Bullo.
‡ Matt. xxviii. 20. § 1 John v. 3.

able: but will make also with temptation issue that you may be able to bear it."* He proposed his own example, the assurance given him of the sufficiency of grace to repel the assaults of Satan,† and he did not hesitate to say: "I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me."‡

It can scarcely be necessary to add the testimonies of ancient faith on this point, as all the exhortations of the Fathers and their reproaches to sinners suppose the possibility of observing the divine law in all its branches. If in a single point the impossibility of obedience be admitted, the voice of Religion is an empty sound, and sin is a phantom. Who can think that a holy and just Being can require of his creatures what they cannot of themselves fulfil, and can deny them the aid which they humbly implore in order to fulfil it? The infidel might well decry the tyranny and injustice of such a Deity. The task master that scourges his slave for failing to do an amount of work beyond his strength would appear to advantage compared with the Supreme Being, decreeing eternal punishment against the weak mortal that fails to do what he is utterly unable to accomplish. Pharaoh refusing the straw to the Israelites, and still exacting the full task, was less cruel, than God would be, did He refuse even to his just servants the necessary aids of grace, and still require acts which without such aids are impossible.

* 1 Cor. x. 12. † 2 Cor. xii. 9. ‡ Phil. iv. 13.

CHAPTER XIX.

GOOD WORKS.

We call those works which are conformable to the dictates of reason or natural law, morally good; and whe performed under the impulse of grace, though not by jus men, we ascribe to them a certain supernatural virtue; bu we call them emphatically *good works* when done unde the influence of grace, by just men, and in a manner t deserve an eternal reward. None perhaps will dispute th term in the first acceptation; but the erroneous idea whic Luther had of the consequences of the fall of Adam mad him regard all the works of man as works of a corrup being, and mortally sinful in themselves. The fœtus itself in the mother's womb is, he said, sin.* The same was the sentiment of Calvin, who conceived that original sin essentially vitiated the nature of man: "Let this be for us an unquestionable truth, which no machinations may subvert, the mind of man is so utterly estranged from the justice of God, that it has no desire, wish, or design which is not impious, depraved, foul, impure and flagitious: the heart of man is so thoroughly infected with poison that

* "Lutum illud ex quo vasculum hoc fingi cœpit, damnabile est, Fœtus in utero, antequam nascimur et homines esse incipimus, peccatum est." Luther, in Ps. iv.

nothing can proceed from it but a sickening stench."* The Articles of the Church of England partially adopt this view: "Works done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God. . . . Yea rather for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin."† The Catholic faith does not present to us this frightful picture of total depravity. Human nature, though wounded by original sin, is not entirely corrupted; the vestiges of its dignity and excellence are discoverable even in its decayed state. The essence and integrity of our nature remain, although we have been despoiled of our privileges and left in comparative helplessness and degradation. The works done in conformity with reason, and for no vicious end, have a moral character, although the individual who performs them may not himself be acceptable to God. The heathen may practise obedience to parents, fidelity to friends, generosity to the children of enemies, without meriting punishment from God for these acts, which, however, are not sanctified by the principle of Christian faith, or love. He may even afford a useful lesson of morals to such as with greater knowledge unite less obedience to the dictates of natural law. "For when the Gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature those things that are of the law; these not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts."‡

It is an error to suppose that no divine grace is given to any one who has not faith in Christ, for God, good and merciful as he is, in numberless ways enlightens, moves, and draws his creatures, and oftentimes by many previous

* Inst. l. ii. c. v. sub finem. † Art. xiii. ‡ Rom. ii. 14.

gifts prepares them for the great gift of faith. The reason, then, assigned in the Articles of the Church of England is not valid, for they may proceed from the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his Spirit, although "they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ."* When the Apostle says: "all that is not of faith is sin,"† he uses the term for the rule of conduct, that is for conscience, guided by revealed principles, and practically applying them. Whatever is done in opposition to its dictates is self-condemned, and therefore sinful: "Blessed is he that condemneth not himself in that which he alloweth. But he that discerneth, if he eat, is condemned; because not of faith. For all that is not of faith is sin."

It concerns us more especially to consider works done before justification and directed to its attainment. We have already seen that various dispositions besides faith are necessary, and that they do not merit justification, although it is granted by Divine mercy, in accordance with the promises of pardon so often made to the repentant sinner. As we are unwilling to embarrass ourselves with scholastic distinctions, we do not feel it necessary to give a name to this connexion between these dispositions and justification.

Justification, being gratuitous, presupposes no good works, such as are strictly deserving of this title. Faith, fear, hope, and compunction, are dispositions of mind and virtues: and works which are performed under their influence, before justification, are, in a certain sense, good, because not only conformable to the moral law, but proceeding from a supernatural principle and directed to a supernatural end: yet divines are wont to give the title of

* Art. xii. † Rom. xiv. 23.

"good works" exclusively to those performed in the state of grace. Through a desire of appeasing God, the penitent humbles his soul in fasting, prays earnestly and frequently, and seeks to redeem his iniquities by alms to the poor; and acting in all these things under the influence of divine grace, his works are good; but until he has obtained forgiveness, whether by the deep compunction of his heart, with the purpose of having recourse to the sacraments, or by the sacraments received with the necessary dispositions, he does not become entitled to a supernatural reward. New graces follow those wherewith he corresponds, and he becomes more immediately disposed for justification; but his works are destitute of supernatural merit.* When, then, it is said that man is justified by faith without works, it is not only true of the observances of the ceremonial law, and of mere natural works, but also of good works of a supernatural kind, which cannot be the meritorious cause of justification. "The goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared; not by the works of justice which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us."† The ancient penitents did not flatter themselves, that their fasts, and hair-shirts, and other austerities, merited the pardon of their sins; but they afflicted themselves, under a deep sense of guilt, and they justly hoped that their humiliation would be favourably accepted by God, who graciously regards the man who trembles at his words.

Mr. Newman writes of persons "turning to the thought of religion:" "They are not gifted with *habitual* grace, but they still are visited by Divine influences, or by *actual* grace, or rather *aid*; and these influences are the first fruits

* Tract 67, p. 176. † Titus iii. 4.

of the grace of justification going before it, are intended to lead on to it, and to be perfected in it, as twilight leads to day. And since it is a Scripture maxim, 'that he that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much,' and 'to whosoever hath, to him shall be given;' therefore, it is quite true that works done with Divine aid, and in faith *before* justification *do* dispose men to receive the grace of justification;—such were Cornelius's alms, fasting, and prayers, which led to his baptism."* Having these acts particularly in view the Council of Trent anathematized "whosoever would assert that all works done before justification, in whatsoever way they be done, are truly sins, and deserve the wrath of God."† The Sovereign Pontiffs have likewise condemned several propositions, which asserted that all the works of sinners are sinful, and that no moral virtue was possessed by the philosophers of antiquity.

Consistent with himself, Luther carried out his false principles to their extreme consequences, and maintained that the works of a justified man, as the actions of a corrupt being, are in themselves mortal sins.‡ Calvin reechoed this sentiment, not hesitating to assert that no work can be performed by the saints, which does not deserve ignominy,§ and which is not rather deserving of eternal damnation than of an everlasting reward.‖ Melancthon, Kemnitz, and the Reformers generally, participated in these views. The Catholic Church, on the contrary, considering

* Tract No. 90, § 3. † Sess. VI. can. vii.
‡ In assert. art. ii. xxxi. xxxii. et xxxvi.
§ L. iii. Inst. c. xiv. § ix.
‖ In antidoto Concilii Sess. vi. c. xi.

the just man to be engrafted in the vine, Christ Jesus, regards his works as fruits of justice, deriving their excellence from the Divine trunk, of which he is a branch. It is difficult to conceive how any one could seriously imagine, that an act done by a servant of God, for a supernatural motive, under a supernatural influence, could be sinful. Such an idea was certainly not derived from Scripture, which by inculcating the performance of good works, and promising a reward, evidently shows that they are not sinful; since who will say that God commands or rewards sin? "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."* Good works are compared by St. Paul to gold, silver, and precious stones, built on the foundation of faith,† and he wishes the rich of this world "to become rich in good works,"‡ and he urges "that they, who believe in God, may be careful to excel in good works."§

It was customary with the Reformers to apply to the works of the just the words of Isaiah: "We have all become as one unclean, and all our justices as the rag of a menstruous woman."‖ Yet it at once strikes the reader that the prophet is deploring prevailing corruption, which extended in many even to the rites and observances of religion, rather than defining universally the quality of the works of just men. This Calvin and Luther felt themselves forced to remark in their Commentaries on the passage, although elsewhere they did not scruple to apply it to good works. The prophet had just given vent to the

* Matt. v. 16. † 1 Cor. iii. ‡ 1 Tim. vi. 18.
§ Titus iii. 8. ‖ Isaiah lxiv. 6.

expression of his admiration, at the wonders which divine goodness had prepared for those who should live under the new dispensation, and the rewards bestowed on him who doth justice: "From the beginning of the world," he says, "they have not heard, nor perceived with the ears: the eye hath not seen, O God, besides thee what things thou hast prepared for them that wait for thee. Thou hast met him that rejoiceth and doth justice: in thy ways they shall remember thee." He contrasts with this happy state of things present to his vision, the actual corruptions that prevailed in his time; and he views the future rejection of all their ceremonial observances, which should give place to holier rites. Who is it that will venture to designate as filthy rags, the fervent prayers and holy aspirations of the servants of Jesus Christ, the charitable works of those who view him in the persons of the poor, the labours of Apostles and Apostolic men, and the sufferings of the martyrs for the unwavering profession of his faith? We willingly admit that imperfections are for the most part found in the best works of the just; wherefore St. Bernard has applied to them the words of the prophet: as he was wont to express in Scriptural language his own sentiments, without pretending thereby to attach such meaning to the sacred text as its genuine interpretation. Such imperfections, however, do not destroy the substantial character of goodness which the works derive from the grace of Jesus Christ, although they detract from their perfection. Newland, after Burnet, asserts that we hold that "men by their good works have so fully satisfied the law of God, that nothing is wanting to complete their perfection;"*

* Art. xii. p. 182. Analysis of Burnet.

but the Council of Trent, to which he refers as his authority, in declaring that "nothing is wanting to justified men, why they should not be considered as having fully satisfied the Divine law by such works as are done in God," expressly qualifies it by saying, "as far as our present condition admits" (*pro hujus statu.*)*

We know that the justified man is not exempt from the assaults of his passions, but no condemnation awaits him for what he experiences against his will; and since he resists the corrupt propensity, it is not he, but sinful passion abiding in him, which produces these involuntary movements. "Now then it is no more I that do it; but sin that dwelleth in me."† God forbid that the words of the Apostle be perverted to indulge security in the wilful transgression of the divine law! Man cannot, even in the privacy of his heart, cherish a corrupt desire, without incurring the guilt of actual crime, in the sight of Him to whom the secrets of the heart lie open. He must faithfully and perseveringly resist, for the sight of God is promised only to the clean of heart. If he yields, he loses grace, and becomes liable to eternal torments, and his faith or his election, (concerning which he can know nothing,) affords him no security that he will not be forever banished from that kingdom, into which nothing defiled can enter.

Whilst we willingly give to those who assail good works as self-righteousness, all the advantage which can be derived from their disclaimers of any intention to corrupt morals, we feel that they in reality sap the foundations of Christian morality. With the authors of the Tracts, we are compelled to remark as the fatal and

* Sess. VI. cap. xvi. de justif. † Rom. vii. 17.

natural result of the maxims of Luther and Calvin, the disregard of all moral restraint by their disciples, and "the perpetration of crimes almost unequalled in the annals of the world" by the Puritans, who loudly proclaimed the same rules of action.*

* Tract No. 80, on Reserve.

CHAPTER XX.

NECESSITY OF GOOD WORKS.

It is not easy to conceive how any one with the Gospel before him could have seriously denied the necessity and merit of good works, or spoken in any way that might lead men to undervalue or reject them. Yet, strange to say! such was the language of the man who boasted himself divinely sent to bring back the Church to her primitive purity and perfection. Under the pretence of setting aside all self-righteousness, that the glory of God might be manifest in the justification of the sinner, Luther warned his followers to beware of good works as occasions of self-confidence, whereby the simplicity of faith is destroyed. "Let us," he writes, "beware of sins; but still more of laws and good works: let us only attend to the promise of God and faith."* In his celebrated commentary on the epistle to the Galatians, he says: "When men teach in this way: 'faith indeed justifies, but it is necessary at the same time to keep the commandments of God, because it is written: 'if thou wilt enter unto life, keep the commandments,' Christ in this manner is at once denied, and faith is abolished, since what belongs to God alone is ascribed to the commandments of God, or to the law.'"† Melancthon subscribed to this doctrine of his Master; yet in the confession of Augsburg‡ and in the Apology, as also in the Saxon Confession, he and the Lutherans with him receded from these gloomy maxims, and acknowledged the necessity and even the merit of works in terms almost

* Serm. de Novo Test. sive de Missa. † In Cap. ii. ad Galatas.

‡ Art. vi. Synt. Gen. p. 12. ib. p. 20. cap. 21.

equivalent to those of the Council of Trent. With the exception of the Antinomians, modern Protestants admit the necessity of good works as fruits and evidences of a living faith; but deny them all merit and title to glory, which they ascribe wholly and exclusively to the righteousness of Christ imputed to believers. To prevent misconception we again remark that good works, in the strict theological acceptation, are such only as are performed by a justified man under the influence of Divine grace, and in a manner pleasing to God.

The paradoxes of Luther are now generally abandoned. His followers shrink with instinctive horror from the propositions which in his day he put forth with ostentation, and sustained with all the power of his vehement eloquence: "Where there is faith," he said, "no sin can be injurious."* "No sins, but unbelief alone, can damn a Christian."† "Faith alone is necessary: all other things are altogether free."‡ "It is enough for us, through the riches of the glory of God, to have known the Lamb, that takes away the sins of the world. Sin shall not tear us away from him, were we to commit fornication or murder a thousand times in a day. Do you think that the price and redemption offered for our sins in such and so great a lamb, is so trifling?"§ I shall only repeat the remark of Macknight with regard to the Antinomians, whose principles resemble those of Luther; "The impiety and folly of this assertion is too glaring to need any laboured confutation. Sin is sin, by whomsoever and at what time soever committed; and if not forsaken, will most certainly be punished."‖ This Commentator justly censures "all

* In Serm. Sic Deus dilexit mundum.

† L. de capt. Babyl. c. de Baptismo. ‡ In c. ii. ad Gal.

§ Epist. ad Joan. Aurifab. coll. t. 1. Jena 1556. 4. p. 345. b.

‖ Essay vi. on justification § 5.

those explications of the doctrine of justification, which have any tendency to weaken the obligation of good works. For although the abettors of these explications attempt to remove that inconveniency by a variety of subtle distinctions, these being not easily understood by the common people, make little or no impression on their minds; while the consequences which flow from the doctrine they are intended to vindicate being obvious and agreeable to men's passions, have the greatest influence to make them hope for salvation, notwithstanding they continue in their sins. But all hopes of this sort being expressly condemned in the Gospel, every explication of the doctrine of justification which warrants such hopes, I repeat it, ought to be rejected, not only as unscriptural, but as dangerous in the highest degree."* "In speaking of justification, to separate good works from faith, and to make the latter consist wholly in the belief of doctrine, without connecting it with good works, is to err from the truth, as is plain from the many passages of Scripture in which good works are enjoined as necessary to salvation, and bad works are forbidden as bringing condemnation on those who continue in them." After many quotations from Scripture he adds: "After these declarations from Christ and his apostles, can any one doubt that the faith which saves is necessarily connected with good works; and that it is made the condition or means of our justification for any other reason, but because it is the vital principle of true holiness, whereby men are rendered capable of eternal life?"† Dr. Pusey laments that "in these days we seem almost to have lost sight of the truth, that we shall be judged according to our works."‡

* Ibidem, sub finem. † Ibidem § iv.

‡ Tract No. 67 on Baptism, p. 123.

The necessity of good works is strongly inculcated by the Apostle St. James: "What shall it profit my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but hath not works? Shall faith be able to save him?"* The Apostle does not call in question the truth of such a man's assertion; but he denies that faith, such as his, will be able to lead him to salvation. He may have faith so great as to enable him to move mountains; yet without charity it will profit him nothing;† since it is faith working by charity which avails in Christ Jesus. Though he should prophecy in the name of Christ, and cast out devils, and do many miracles, his iniquities shall cause him and his partners in sin to be cast away: "Depart from me, you that work iniquity."‡ This inefficient faith, which does not produce obedience to the law of God, is likened by St. James to that charity of the lips which is not attended by any effort to relieve the sufferers: "So faith also, if it have not works, is dead in itself."§ Demons may be said to have a faith like to this. They know and feel there is a God, under whose severe chastisements they tremble, in this respect superior to the negligent believer, who sets at nought the menaces of divine vengeance. "Thou believest that there is one God: Thou dost well: the devils also believe and tremble."‖ Again he declares that the faith which does not produce works is no better than a lifeless carcase: "for as the body without the spirit is dead: so also faith without works is dead."¶ Faith may exist without works, but it is not a living faith: it is dead for God and for salvation.

No stronger evidence need be adduced of the clearness of the passages of St. James in regard to justifying faith, than the impression they made on the mind of the inventor

* James ii. 14. † 1 Cor. xiii. 2. ‡ Mat. vii. 23.
§ James ii. 17. ‖ Ibidem 19. ¶ Ibidem, 26.

of the new system of justification. So irreconcileable did they appear to Luther with his views, that he indignantly rejected the epistle as unworthy of an Apostle, and called it an epistle of straw. The ingenuity of Calvin discovered a plausible interpretation, and the authority of the epistle has been admitted, whilst his tortuous explanation has been simultaneously received by the followers of the new creed. It is pretended that St. James speaks of a man who falsely claims to have faith, which his want of works proves him to be without: but it is sufficiently obvious to the unbiassed reader, that the Apostle admits the existence of faith, whilst he denies its saving influence, as long as it is sterile and inactive: otherwise it would have been vain to ask: "Shall faith be able to save him?" Macknight observes: "the defenders of justification by faith alone ought to consider, that the doctrines of Religion, both natural and revealed, may be really believed without having any influence on a man's temper and behaviour. . . . Wherefore the belief of the doctrines of the Gospel, however firm it may be, and however zealously contended for, even to the giving of one's body to be burned, will have no influence in any man's justification, if it doth not produce good works. 1 Cor. xiii. 3. A faith of this kind is what James calls 'a dead faith.'"*

The reasoning of the Apostle, St. Paul, against the necessity and efficacy of ceremonial observances and natural works, has been most strangely misapplied to undervalue works of Christian virtue done by just men under the impulse of divine grace. The boasting of works he excluded, expressly declaring these works to be "works of the law."† The works which he said had no share in

* Essay vi. on Justification, § 2.

† Rom. iii. 28. Macknight acknowledges this, and observes:

justification, were such as were merely natural, "according to the flesh,"* and as would imply a natural right to recompense.† Yet the faith by which Abraham was justified, was manifested in obedience and hope, and it disposed him for heroic acts which rendered him a still greater object of divine favor. "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, offering up Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou that faith did co-operate with his works; and by his works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled, saying: 'Abraham believed God, and it was reputed to him to justice, and he was called the friend of God.' Do you see that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only?"‡ Thus the Apostle St. James discourses on the justification of Abraham.

To check the too great confidence of the Jews in their legal observances, St. Paul urged the necessity of the supernatural principle of faith: whilst to oppose the error of those who neglected the exercise of virtue, and perverted the passages of St. Paul to sustain their exaggerated views of the efficacy of faith, St. James showed them, from the very example adduced by St. Paul, that the faith by which Abraham was justified, was fruitful in good works. St. Paul himself had not neglected to point out the fruits of faith. Being justified by faith, and advanced thereby to the dignity of sons of God, "we glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

"The law which requires faith working by love, in order to justification, effectually excludeth all boasting; because works, proceeding from faith, being imperfect, do not entitle him who performs them to justification." Essay VI. on Justification, § 1. Although the meaning of the author be not entirely correct, his words are capable of a Catholic interpretation.

* Rom. iv. 1. † Ibidem 4. ‡ Jac. ii. 21.

and patience trial; and trial hope. And hope confoundeth not: because the charity of God is poured forth into our hearts, by the Holy Ghost who is given us."* He warned the faithful that "there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not according to the flesh;†" and he observed that Christ had come "in the likeness of sinful flesh, and of sin hath condemned sin in the flesh, that the justification of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit."‡ To purity of life he subjoined patience as a condition for salvation: "if so we suffer with him (Christ) that we may be also glorified with him."§

From these testimonies, and from the whole tenor of the Scriptures, the necessity of good works is manifest; the only case in which their absence can be innoxious being when the opportunity of exercising them is not afforded. The baptized infant taken out of life, enjoys the felicity of heaven as a mere boon: the justified sinner, who at the moment of his justification is launched into eternity, does not forfeit the privileges to which he had attained. "If any one," writes St. Augustine, "immediately after he has embraced the faith, pass out of life, the justification of faith abides with him, not on account of previous good works, since he attained to it, not through merits but by grace, nor on account of works that followed, since he is not allowed to remain in life."‖ Thus the penitent thief passed to the joys of Paradise, with no other work to plead for him than the reproof of his companion, and the prayer offered up to his Saviour: and many in death experience like mercy: but the principle productive of good works must exist in all cases.

* Rom. v. 3. † Ibidem viii. 1. ‡ Ibidem 3.
§ Ibidem 17. ‖ L. lxxxiii. q. 76.

CHAPTER XXI.

WORKS OF SUPEREROGATION.

In the language of scholastic theology, works of supererogation are such as are not positively commanded, and therefore not absolutely necessary to salvation. It surprises one who knows the Catholic principles on this subject, to read the invectives of Protestant writers against this class of good works. The Presbyterian Confession is comparatively moderate: "They who, in their obedience, attain to the greatest height which is possible in this life, are so far from being able to supererogate and to do more than God requires, that they fall short of much which in duty they are bound to do."* The Anglican Articles cannot receive the same praise: "Voluntary works besides," say they, "over and above God's commandments, which they call works of supererogation, cannot be taught without arrogancy and impiety: for, by them, men do declare that they do not only render unto God as much as they are bound to do; but that they do more for his sake than of bounden duty is required: whereas, Christ saith plainly, when ye have done all that are commanded to you, say, we are unprofitable servants."† Both proceed on false suppositions, so that to explain our doctrine is the sure way of disproving their allegations.

We freely acknowledge that God has a strict claim on

* Ch. xvi. n. 4. † Art. xiv.

all our affections and energies, and that he could most justly require of us unlimited obedience without giving us the least recompense. When we have done all things, we confess ourselves to be unprofitable servants. We know that we fall short of the perfection of the Christian law, and that "in many things we all offend." Therefore do the just, as well as the unjust, daily repeat: "forgive us our trespasses;" and we are taught to confess and deplore our imperfections and many sins. But the indulgence of our heavenly Father is such that he has not required absolute perfection as a necessary condition for salvation. He has commanded us to avoid certain acts under penalty of his eternal displeasure; and he has made the performance of others essential to the attainment of the joys of his kingdom. We are, however, exhorted to be perfect, even as He is perfect, and the exercise of certain heroic acts is commended, without being strictly enjoined. Thus our divine Redeemer stated as a condition for salvation, the observance of the commandments: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments;"* and when the youth alleged his fidelity in their observance, and inquired what yet remained to be performed for the attainment of perfection, our Lord answered: "If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."* Had the youth obeyed this counsel, he would undoubtedly have performed an acceptable act, which would have received a special reward in heaven. It was not made a condition for his entrance into life: it was not positively commanded: but it was left to his choice, as a matter of greater perfection, to be specially rewarded in heaven. In parting

* Matt. xix. 21.

with all his worldly possessions to follow Christ, who had not where to lay his head, the young man would have done nothing in proportion with the boundless love of him who, being rich, became poor for our sakes, that through his poverty we might be rich;* but he would have done more than he was strictly commanded to do; and the cheerfulness with which this act might have been performed, would have been specially acceptable to God. Newland, after Burnet, argues from his sadness that the sacrifice of his riches was absolutely enjoined on him, and not left to his option as a matter of greater perfection; but the words of our Lord declare the contrary. "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast." His sadness proceeded from the conflict between his attachment to his vast possessions, and his aspirations after perfection. It implied no consciousness of a positive command to part with his property. The words which our Redeemer subjoined declare the danger of such attachment, even where there is no actual sin: "Then Jesus said to his disciples, Amen, I say to you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven."

The attempt to establish a positive command, where our Redeemer gave only a counsel, is followed by an application of the principle to others: "Thus," says Mr. Newland, "in cases of a famine or persecution, it might devolve on some as a necessary duty to sell all, in order to the relief of others."† But surely it is clear that sacrifices of property can be made in less extreme cases, and yet are not enjoined. The early Christians sold all they possessed, and placed the proceeds in the hands of the

* 2 Cor. viii. 9. † Analysis, p. 194.

Apostles, renouncing their individual right of property, and making thereout a common fund, as St. Luke states. —This was a matter perfectly optional with each one: wherefore St. Peter, reproaching Ananias with his hypocrisy in presenting a portion of the proceeds as the whole, reminded him that he was under no necessity of giving it at all: "Whilst it remained, did it not remain to thee? and after it was sold was it not in thy power?"* So the greater or less amount of alms which a wealthy individual may give, must be to a considerable extent a matter of free choice. The rich are commanded to succor their needy brethren: but no one imagines that they are obliged to reduce themselves to a state of indigence or suffering in order to relieve others. If, then, a wealthy man, not burthened with family or relatives, reserve to himself what is barely necessary for his decent maintenance, and give all his riches to the poor, who will deny that he has done more than was absolutely commanded? He may, otherwise, greatly fall short of much which in duty he is bound to do, but in this respect he has done more than of bounden duty is required, and he will receive an abundant reward, proportioned to the cheerfulness with which he made the sacrifice. Thus St. Paul exhorted the Corinthians to the liberal exercise of charity, rather by the hope of abundant rewards, than by the fear of punishment for transgressing a command: "Now this I say: He who soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly: and he who soweth in blessings, shall also reap of blessings. Every one as he hath determined in his heart, not with sadness, or of necessity: For God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound in you: that ye always having all sufficiency in all things may abound to every good work."†

* Acts iv. 32. † 2 Cor. ix. 6.

In the exercise of every virtue there are numberless cases in which there is no positive command, and consequently the action, being rather of counsel than of necessity, is properly styled an act of supererogation. "Now concerning virgins," says St. Paul, "I have no commandment of the Lord: but I give counsel, as having obtained mercy of the Lord, to be faithful. . . . . He that giveth his virgin in marriage, doth well: and he that giveth her not, doth better."* Again Newland maintains that this better part is commanded to some: "He who finds that he can limit himself without endangering his purity, though no law restrains him from marrying, is certainly under obligations to follow that course of life in which there are fewer temptations, and greater opportunities to attend on the service of God."† This gloss is, however, without foundation in the text. The Apostle declares that he has no Divine commandment, and leaves to each one liberty to act according to choice, provided it be in the Lord. When, therefore, persons cherish celibacy in order to devote themselves more unreservedly to the Divine glory and the salvation of their neighbor, they go beyond what is positively commanded.

The disinterestedness of St. Paul, which caused him to forego his right to maintenance, lest he should put a hindrance to the success of the Gospel among the Corinthians, was an act of zeal and generosity, inspired by heroic charity, but commanded by no law. Newland says: "he was under an inward law of doing all things to the glory of God: and by this law he was as much bound as if there had been a stated compulsory law lying upon him."‡ This, however, is a gratuitous supposition.§ Had he

* 1 Cor. vii. 38. † Analysis, p. 195. ‡ Analysis, p. 196.
§ Vide Symbolik von Mohler, l. 1. c. iii. § xxiii.

exacted his support, he would not have sinned, for he strongly asserts his right to demand it: in not using this right, he acted under the high impulse of charity, and exercised generosity beyond what was commanded.

The argument against works of supererogation taken from the imperfections and sins to which just men are subject, is thus proposed by the same writer: "St. James says: 'In many things we offend all.' Now if the guilt of sin be eternal, and the pretended merit of obeying counsels is only temporary, no temporary merit can take off an eternal guilt. So that it must first be supposed that a man is, and has been perfect as to the precepts of obligation, before he can have an overplus of merit."* To this the reply is easy. The offences into which just men fall are of a slight character, not involving eternal guilt, for justice is destroyed by deadly sin: the merit of obeying counsels extends to eternity, for Jesus Christ promised a treasure in heaven to the rich young man, if for the love of perfection he would part with his wealth to relieve the poor, and to Virgins it is given to sing in the heavenly courts a canticle which none others can sing, and to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. To gain this merit a man must be in the state of grace, and if he has transgressed any precept of the Law, he must have deplored it and obtained its pardon. His past sins cancelled by Divine mercy, and his present imperfections do not prevent his sacrifice from being graciously accepted and rewarded by his Father who is in heaven. He has no overplus of merit: for although he does more than is absolutely required to gain admittance into heaven, yet will every good work of his be rewarded far beyond its deserts, and in a manner becoming

* Ibidem.

the bounty of his Judge. Spiritual advantages may accrue to others as members of the same mystical body, enjoying the communion of the saints. The united and fervent prayers of those who have renounced all to follow Christ will obtain graces for their less perfect brethren: their humiliations and penal inflictions, oftentimes far severer than their offences may require, will serve to supply the deficiency of those torpid souls who neglect works of penance: the heroism of their charity and of their patience will be accepted in Christ for his mystical body of which they are members. Thus St. Paul rejoiced in his sufferings, considering the advantages thence to flow to the faithful: "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh for his body, which is the Church."*

Bishop McIlvaine complains of the occasion given by the doctrine of inherent righteousness to the multiplication of penitential works, and other works directed to secure personal holiness. "Thus will arise," he says, "the monster of supererogatory merit."† That there is nothing monstrous in the Catholic idea of supererogation must be evident from the above explanation. If, however, no worse results arise from the principle, we can bear the reproach, since we have learned from the Scriptures, to "bring forth fruit worthy of penance," to "chastise the body and bring it into captivity," to "be converted to the Lord with all our heart in mourning, fasting and weeping," to be "pursuers of good works," thereby to make sure our calling and election. The exercise of faith, virtue, knowledge, abstinence, patience, godliness, fraternal love, and charity is urged by the Prince of the Apostles as the

* Col. i. 24. † Oxford Divinity, p. 89.

means to secure our eternal happiness. "If these things be with you and abound, they will make you to be neither empty nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For so an entrance will be administered to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."*

* 2 Peter, i. 8. 11.

CHAPTER XXII.

MERIT OF GOOD WORKS.

The merit of good works may be said to be the main subject of difference between Catholics and Protestants, since their necessity, at least as evidences of faith, is very generally conceded. Luther, Calvin, and most of their disciples altogether detested the very mention of merit, and thought that the ancient fathers by the incautious use of the term had inflicted a fatal wound on Christian faith. Yet it is manifest that the clamor on this subject proceeds from an erroneous conception of Catholic principles. We disclaim all merit arising from mere natural works; and we ascribe no merit to any works whatever, unless in as much as they proceed from the grace of Jesus Christ, and are offered to God through Him, and are mercifully accepted, according to the plan freely established by God, and the promises freely made by Him. "Eternal life," says the Council of Trent, "is to be proposed to such as do good unto the end and hope in God, both as a grace mercifully promised to the children of God through Jesus Christ, and as a reward to be faithfully rendered to their good works and merits, in virtue of the promise of God. For since Christ Jesus himself constantly communicates his virtues to those who are justified, as the head to the members, and as the vine to the branches; which virtue always precedes, and accompanies, and follows their good

works, and without which they could be no wise agreeable to God and meritorious: we must believe that nothing more is wanting to the justified, why they should not be considered as having fully satisfied the divine law, as far as the condition of this life admits, by such works as are done in God, and truly merited the attainment of eternal life in due time, (provided however they depart in grace)."* The Presbyterian Confession of Faith says: "We cannot, by our best works, merit pardon of sin, or eternal life at the hand of God. Yet notwithstanding, the persons of believers being accepted through Christ, their good works also are accepted in him—he, looking upon them in his Son, is pleased to accept and reward that which is sincere, although accompanied with many weaknesses and imperfections."† The Anglican Articles say that though they "cannot endure the severity of God's judgment, yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ."‡ Mr. Newman explains this as meaning that "God rewards them and that of course according to their degree of excellence."§ The chief reason which Newland after Burnet assigns why works cannot be meritorious, is the imperfection which is found in them, "for where there is guilt to be pardoned, there is no pretension to merit;"‖ but this supposes that there is guilt in every action, which is a false hypothesis. Besides he solves the objection in a different form, when he shows that works may be acceptable to God, and truly good, although not altogether perfect.¶

In the Confession of Augsburg, and elsewhere, Melancthon admits that the just merit certain rewards because

* Sess. vi. cap. xvi. de justif.
† Ch. xvi. § 5, 6.
‡ Art. xii.
§ Tract No. 90, § 3.
‖ Analysis, p. 184.
¶ Ibidem, p. 185.

promised by God, but maintains that eternal life is a gratuitous gift which cannot be merited. Yet if the Divine promise be the ground of merit, eternal life, no less than any special rewards, must be admitted to be an object of merit, since it is expressly promised as the reward of sacrifices made for Christ: "Amen I say to you, there is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive much more in the present time, and in the world to come life everlasting."* He said: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.† Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."‡ Heaven then becomes theirs: its happiness is the reward of their humility and patience; wherefore he says to them of the day of persecution: "Be glad in that day and rejoice: for behold your reward is great in heaven."§

As it is conceded, even by the Presbyterian Confession, that God rewards good works, the dispute about merit, may seem to be a debate about words. In truth, if the qualifications which the Council of Trent attaches to the word be borne in mind, there can be little difficulty as to its use, to signify the title which man has through Jesus Christ to eternal life, by the fulfilment, under Divine influence, of the conditions required for its attainment. Christ has told us: "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit; for without me you can do nothing."‖ The fruit-

* Luke xviii. 29. † Mat. v. 3. ‡ Ibidem 10.
§ Luke vi. 23. ‖ John xv. 4.

fulness of the saints is derived from the heavenly vine, whose branches they are. Separated from this stock, they would wither and decay. Is it derogatory to the merits of Christ to ascribe to the saints merits derived from him? Does it militate against the glory of God, to recognize in his servants virtues, which are the fruits of his grace, and for which his bounty reserves a recompense? Those who have clamored against Catholic doctrine on this head, have strangely misrepresented its character. Good works, as well as faith, are radically the gifts of God, and fruits of his grace. "By grace," says the Apostle, "you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, for it is the gift of God, not of works, that no man may glory. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus in good works, which God hath prepared that we should walk in them."* Our glory is in the cross of Christ; but we feel bound to become like to the image of the Only begotten, and to exercise the virtues whereof he has left the example.

Christ represents himself as a judge, bestowing happiness and decreeing punishment, according to the deserts of those who appear at his tribunal. He invites his elect to glory on account of acts of charity exercised towards himself in the persons of the poor: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat: I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink: I was a stranger, and you took me in: naked, and you covered me: sick, and you visited me: I was in prison, and you came to me."†

The Catholic doctrine on good works is fully sustained

* Eph ii. 8. † Mat. xxv. 34.

by these passages. The just expect and hope for an eternal reward from God through his mercy, and through the merits of Jesus Christ, for good works done in God, (that is, under the influence of divine grace, and in accordance with the divine will,) provided, however, they persevere to the end in doing good, and observing the divine commandments.* This hope was cherished by the Apostle; and is grounded on the express words of Christ. When we style such works meritorious, we speak not of their intrinsic value, but of the merit they have, according to the bountiful dispensation of God, from the grace and merit of Christ. It is useless and unfair to cavil about a term, the meaning whereof is so well defined. Eternal life is the gift of God, because of his pure goodness and mercy he has rendered man capable of attaining it, and through the grace purchased for us by the death of Christ he enables us to fulfil the conditions for its attainment: wherefore the Apostle says, "the grace of God life everlasting in Christ Jesus."† But God having graciously promised this boon as a reward to those who obey and love him, the fulfilment of the conditions gives a title to the recompense, and constitutes what is justly termed merit. "Life eternal," says St. Augustin, "which in the end will be enjoyed without end, and is therefore granted to previous merits, nevertheless because these merits to which it is granted were not acquired by us by our own ability, but were produced in us by grace, even itself is called grace for no other reason than because it is gratuitously given: not because it is not given to merits, but because the merits themselves to which it is rendered were given."‡ "O man, if thou art to receive eternal life, it is

* Conc. Trid. Sess. vi. Can. xxvi. † Rom. vi. 23.

‡ Ep. cv. ad Sixtum.

indeed the reward of justice: but to thee it is a grace, since justice itself is a grace."*

In the epistle to the Romans, where the Apostle insists so strenuously on the mystery of the atonement, and excludes so clearly all boasting of works, and all natural or legal righteousness, he nevertheless represents the glory of heaven as the reward of perseverance in good works. Speaking of the revelation of the just judgment of God at the last day, he subjoins, "who will render to every man according to his works. To them, indeed, who, according to patience in good work, seek glory, and honor, and incorruption, eternal life ... glory, and honor, and peace, to every one that worketh good."† He elsewhere speaks of eternal life as the fruit of good works, and urges the faithful to diligence in their performance, as their reward is great and certain: "He that soweth in the Spirit, of the Spirit shall reap life everlasting. And in doing good, let us not fail: for in due time we shall reap, not failing."‡ He exhorts the rich "to do good, to be rich in good works, to give easily, to communicate to others, to lay up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the true life."§ The obvious meaning of all these passages is, that true and eternal life is proposed as a reward for our fidelity, and that our happiness will be proportioned to our zeal in the performance of good works. He elsewhere ascribes to patience under suffering the great glory which awaits the persecuted servants of God: "For that which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory."‖ He rests his

* Ep. cv. ad Sixtum. † Rom. ii. 6, 10. ‡ Gal. vi. 8.
§ 1 Tim. vi. 18. ‖ 2 Cor. iv. 17.

own hopes of happiness on his fidelity in corresponding with the grace of God, and from his prison, when daily expecting to be led forth to martyrdom, he writes: "I am even now ready to be sacrificed; and the time of my dissolution is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord the just judge will render to me in that day: and not only to me, but to them also that love his coming."* In bestowing glory, God, then, acts as a just judge, and crowns justice. His grace and mercy bestowed the gifts which prepare his servants for glory; but they are entitled to the reward which he vouchsafed to promise them. The justice of their claim detracts nothing from his sovereign munificence, since it was the free act of his bounty to render them capable of his enjoyment, by bestowing the graces with which they have corresponded; and he gratuitously promised the reward which his sovereign truth now obliges him to bestow. There is no room for human pride or glory, in works done under the influence of divine grace: "God forbid that a Christian should either trust or glory in himself, and not in the Lord, whose goodness towards all men is so great, that he wills that what are his gifts should be their merits."†

St. John extols the happiness of the martyrs and saints of Christ, and ascribes their glory to their labors and sufferings. "Here," he says, "is the patience of the saints, who keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven, saying to me: Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. From henceforth now, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from

* 2 Tim. iv. 6. † Counc. Trent. Sess. vi. cap. xvi. de justif.

their labors: for their works follow them."* Their works, then, follow them, and are rewarded with peace, and joy, and glory. They no doubt owe their salvation to the Lamb, in whose blood they have washed their robes white: they proclaim his praises, because he redeemed them from every tribe, and tongue, and people: they glory not in their works, for all their value arises from the grace and merits of the Redeemer: but their works are the condition established by Christ for the attainment of life eternal, and are the immediate title to the possession of the inheritance which He purchased for them by his blood.

That there is a great difference in the zeal with which the servants of God devote themselves to works of piety and charity, is a matter obvious to every observer; and it is worthy of the divine bounty to reward with greater liberality his more devoted servant. We are assured, in many places of Scripture, that God will give to each one according to his works. Eternal life is the recompense of all; and those who come latest into the vineyard, and those who obey the earliest call, are alike partakers of this reward: but as star differs from star in brightness, the saints in glory variously reflect the divine splendor which invests them. The hope of a greater communication of bliss is a powerful incentive to virtuous actions. A cup of cold water given for the sake of Christ does not lose its reward: but how bright are the crowns of the apostles and of apostolic men, who left all things, and devoted all their energies to spread the knowledge of Jesus Christ! How glorious are the martyrs who washed their robes white in the blood of the Lamb! How privileged are the Virgins, who, in the heavenly temple, sing a canticle

* Apoc. xiv. 12.

which it is granted to no others to sing, and follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth !

This diversity of recompense, marking the different degrees of fervor with which the saints served God, detracts nothing from the Divine glory, and gives nothing to human merit, but shows forth Divine wisdom and bounty in a most admirable way. The infant, who, born anew of water and the Holy Ghost, found entrance into the kingdom of God, receives from gratuitous bounty an unspeakable degree of glory: but Polycarp or Hilarion, who passed a long life in the service of their divine Master, receive a higher crown, with which penitential inflictions or sufferings for the faith are not worthy to be compared. God crowns his own gifts, when he rewards the merits acquired under the influence of his grace: and as his munificence is displayed in rendering man capable of his beatific vision, so does his wisdom shine forth in proportioning the communication of his glory, to the degree of zeal with which the gifts of his grace were employed. "If the gifts of God," says St. Augustin, "are thy good merits, God does not crown thy merits, as thine, but as his own gifts."*

* L. de gratia et libero arbitrio cap. vii.

CONCLUSION.

From this brief exposition and defence of the Catholic doctrine on justification, it is manifest that it is in strict harmony with Scripture and with the Divine attributes. The glory of the sanctification and salvation of man is given to God, whose grace rouses us from the lethargy of sin, and conducts us happily to the heavenly kingdom. The mystery of the cross is exhibited in all its awful grandeur; and grace and salvation are acknowledged to be derived from it. The freedom of the human will is maintained, and thereby the guilt of the obstinate sinner is shown, and the obedience of the servant of God appears a homage whereby the Deity is glorified. "It is right," as Bossuet has well observed, "to give all to Jesus Christ. The Church gave him all in the justification of the sinner as well and better than Luther, but in a different way. We have seen that Luther gave him all, by stripping man of every thing; and the Church, on the contrary, gives him all, by considering as an effect of his grace whatever good man has, and even the good use of his free will in all that regards a Christian life."* The merit of man in these circumstances nowise derogates from the glory of God, or the mystery of the atonement, and the elect will for ever sing the praises of the Lamb as the cause of their salvation: "Because Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God in thy blood.†

* Histoire des Variations, l. v. § ii. † Apoc. v. 9.

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